

TOP STORY: Making peace practical

July 12-25, 1993

In THE SET TIMES

the alternative newsmagazine

CLINTON BOMBS EVERYWHERE

...on health care, page 2
...on the budget, page 12
...with blacks, page 14
...in Iraq, page 26

Russia: prelude to a czar?



EDITORIAL

THE INSURANCE COMPANY PROTECTION AGENCY

You may have noticed that Clinton administration talk about health care has taken a turn away from the early promises of affordable, comprehensive coverage for all Americans. Now we hear proposals to cut back on Medicare, rumors of exorbitant mandatory health insurance costs for small business and higher taxes to pay for a plan that may be less inclusive than promised. But we rarely hear about the cost of the insurance system to consumers or about the bonanza to the five major insurance companies that "managed competition" will be.

During his election campaign, Bill Clinton played to popular opinion and promised to "take on the big insurance companies." But if he were honest, he would have said that he intended to take *on board* the big insurance companies.

The five biggest insurance firms—Aetna, CIGNA, Metropolitan Life, Prudential and Travelers—have formed an alliance to promote Clinton's managed competition. And they "expect to have a central role in forming these [health care] networks," says the president of the CIGNA Employee Benefits Companies. This is big business, and it will require big companies, is his message.

So White House officials, and many others, now predict that as larger pools of consumers are put together by the big five, consolidation will force scores of smaller companies to merge, or to fail.

But insurance companies are despised by most Americans. So the administration, aware that this potential windfall might not sit well with the public, announced last month that it would seek to increase competition in the market for medical care by stripping the health insurance industry of its long-standing immunity from federal anti-trust laws. This sounds good to the uninitiated, but is a meaningless step. Ever since the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) was established in 1914, it has modified the absolute prohibitions in the Sherman anti-trust law and allowed corporations to share infor-

mation, or merge, if that was deemed beneficial to the industry. And in most cases, the FTC has ruled in favor of the corporations it was set up to regulate.

Consider the auto industry. It is subject to anti-trust laws, but General Motors, Ford and Chrysler produce cars of similar quality and price. They do compete, but only in advertising and marketing. And this kind of competition is simply a burdensome cost to the consumer.

The same is true of insurance companies—just one of the reasons they should not be allowed to control health care. But somehow the obvious truths about the inefficiency and waste of the private health insurance industry never seem to make it into the corporate media. Nor do the examples of methods of financing health care used by other industrialized nations.

Thus, even though a majority of Americans favor a Canadian-style single-payer plan, the *New York Times* has had a near-blackout on this option, according to the United Health Care Action Network. Since Clinton was elected last year, the *Times* has run seven news stories that mentioned single-payer, but only two explained what it was. Yet it has run 66 stories about managed competition. Twelve of New York City's 14 members of Congress are sponsors of the single-payer American Health Security Act. The *Times* does not consider that information fit to print. And its most recent public opinion poll on health care slanted questions in order to increase the favorable response for managed competition.

Could it be that the *Times* is influenced by the fact that six members of its board of directors—half of the board—have direct ties to the insurance industry? Four of these board members are also directors of insurance companies and two are directors of drug companies. And could it be that other major media corporations are similarly connected to the insurance industry?

Certainly, Clinton feels a stronger bond to the giants of the industry that have been so generous in supporting his aspirations than he does to the best interests of the American people. But that is rapidly becoming old news. ◀

The obvious truths about the health care industry seldom make it into print. Could this be the result of corrupt influence?

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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LETTERS

Get it right!

Two questions about the June 14 issue:

Is there some reason that the Rev. Michael Pfleger is profiled without mentioning his denomination (or non-denomination)? Am I to assume Susan Kimmelman's reference to "not just the Catholic Church..." is some sort of clue?

Why did *In These Times* insensitively join letter writer Jeff Balch in his fat bashing with the headline "Slim pickings"? This overweight reader doesn't think Rush Limbaugh's weight is the point. Too bad your magazine thinks ridiculing people for physical appearance is wit.

Carole Martin
New York

Editor's note: Sorry about not making Michael Pfleger's Catholicism explicit. As for the fat bashing, it seems to us that Carole Martin has it backwards. "Slim pickings" is, if anything, a negative comment on the substance of thin people, or, to be politically correct, the metabolically overactive.

Cuba, si! "sanctions," no!

Two points about the otherwise useful and informative piece by Robert Engler (*ITT*, May 31) on the damage to the U.S. economy caused by Washington's embargo of Cuba:

1. The reference in headline and text to "sanctions" is incorrect and

misleading. Its use in the media has an effect—no doubt even a purpose in some places—in conflict with your intentions.

The dictionary definition (and common usage) of the plural of sanction is "a collective measure usually taken by several nations together, for forcing a nation considered to have violated international law to stop the violation."

2. Ironically accentuating the foregoing, and much more important, is the fact (regrettably omitted by Engler's piece as published) that there was a practically unanimous verdict by the United Nations General Assembly Nov. 24, 1992, condemning the U.S. embargo/blockade of Cuba as a violation of international law. (And hence, were it followed to a proper conclusion, a suitable target for sanctions, correctly defined.)

The General Assembly's action was taken by a vote of 57-3, not on humanitarian grounds primarily but on grounds that there was an ongoing violation of the Law of Nations. Even Great Britain, whose ambassador spoke for the entire European Community, agreed with the assessment of illegality. So did Russia. But they abstained from voting, on the stated (but implausible) ground that the issue was purely a "bilateral" one, i.e., solely between the victim and the aggressor.

The incorrect usage will not affect your readership's views, but the omis-

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



sion of the point of law may limit the effectiveness of those moved to act on the subject.

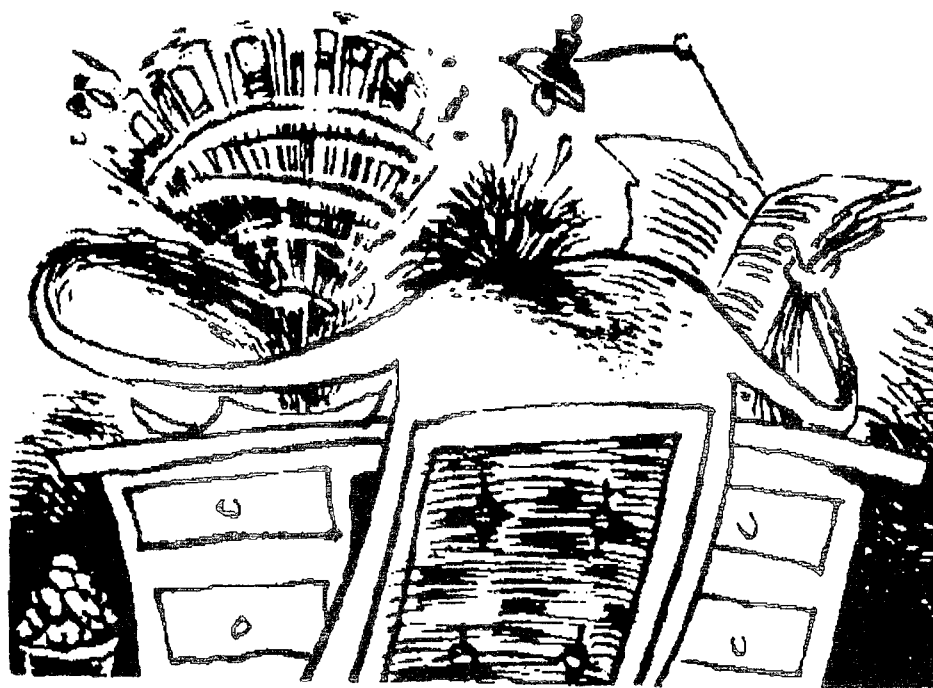
Howard N. Meyer
New York

What about?

The article "Disharmony" by Salim Muwakkil (*ITT*, June 14) is not only biased but dishonest. It is an unabashed defense brief for both Louis Farrakhan and Leonard Jeffries and a whitewash of vituperative anti-Semitic utterances by both men.

Farrakhan's "fiddle diplomacy" is not only a farce but a dishonest attempt to soften criticism of his many years of uttering anti-Semitic diatribes. Perhaps it is not well known that Felix Mendelssohn was compelled to convert from Judaism to Christianity in order to further his musical career. Therefore, playing his music is no gesture to Jews but perhaps a sly suggestion that Jews are acceptable only when they cease being Jews. If Farrakhan meant to reach out to Jews, it would have been appropriate for him to disavow his many years of anti-Semitic utterances. But then the words would have stuck in his craw.

As to Jeffries, stating that the Jews helped to finance the slave trade is not only one-sided but dishonest. Did all Jews finance the slave trade? What about the American, British, French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese slave traders? Why didn't Jeffries mention them, who were in the vast majority? To use what might be called, laughingly, his logic, what about the thousands of African-Americans in prisons across the country for murder, rape, theft, drug dealing (a far greater percentage than that of the general population)? Are we to assume (as Jeffries does about Jews) that all African-Americans are guilty of these crimes? As to the Italians and Jews in Hollywood who were supposed to denigrate blacks in films, what about the other ethnic stu-



dio owners and producers? Should they not be mentioned? What of the many thousands of employers, politicians, police and judges (non-Jews) who denied and deny blacks jobs, the right to vote, the right to reside in a home of their choice, the right to live (lynching)? Why did he not mention the treatment of blacks during slavery by white non-Jews? What about the draft riots in New York City during July of 1863, when Irish Catholics, after driving blacks from their jobs as longshoremen on the waterfront, engaged in a frenzy of violence, lynching dozens of blacks and savagely beating hundreds of others, while setting fire to an orphanage for black children? Why no mention by Jeffries? Obviously, he has an anti-Semitic agenda and carefully selects items that will support his biased and racist views.

The editor of *In These Times* has some explaining to do with regard to permitting such an article to appear.

Max Silverman
New York

Editor's note: It's sad that Max Silverman finds it necessary to raise the ante in response to Salim Muwakkil's report on Louis Farrakhan's tentative step away from anti-Semitism. And it's incredibly myopic to miss the point of Muwakkil's piece, which is that Farrakhan was trying to moderate the rising tensions between African-Americans and Jews. Silverman seems to believe that Farrakhan was trying to seek the approval of whites, not to send a signal to his own followers in the Nation of Islam. And he is blind to the ways in which one negotiates to reduce tensions. If Silverman were interested in more than scoring easy debater points, he might have thought about an appropriate response that would move us a step closer to mutual understanding. Instead, he adds a little to the wall between blacks and Jews.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you wished to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

InSHORT



Library of Congress

FORTY ACRES

*The growing movement
for racial reparations*

Reparations in America (N'COBRA), which convened its fourth annual convention last month in Baton Rouge, La. Organizers of the convention envision

Bubbling just beneath the surface of this country's racial discourse is a growing movement that advocates reparations for African-Americans. One of the largest organizations involved in this movement is the National Coalition of Blacks for



By Woody Igou

Earning your sheepskin

When asked about his son Tim's introduction to the



facts of life, televangelist Pat Robertson, who opposes sex education in

schools, replied, "I let him live on a farm. I guess he learned naturally from the animals that were around." *OK, but don't cry when he eats his children.*

Beauty 1, Wolf 0

Naomi Wolf, feminist author of *The Beauty Myth*, a recent book that shows how women are manipulated and tyrannized by unnatural



standards of beauty, has recently had an overdose of the beautiful. She sat for

glamorous publicity photos by Francesco Scavullo, a photographer best known for his bosomy work for *Cosmopolitan*.

Maybe she was doing undercover work?

Infallible marketing?

The Roman Catholic Church has given its approval for the merchandising of official papal souvenirs on Pope John



Paul II's trip to Denver in August. More than 100 church-sanctioned items

will be available, including T-shirts, fanny packs and a "Pope-Scope," many of which will bear the likeness of the pope. Said the representative of Famous Artist Merchandising, "This is not what I consider to be a for-profit situation like Jurassic Park or Barney." Admit it, you only market dinosaurs.

Another Beltway illiterate

Sen. Bob Dole, a former supporter of Star Wars, drew a blank when asked by his chief of staff to appear on the



Tonight Show in a Darth Vader costume. Sheila Burke reports that her boss, after being

asked to assume the role, responded, "Who the heck is Darth Vader?"

More proof that you don't exist in Washington unless you have your own lobbyists.

APPALL-O-METER SCALE

1. Weightless banality
2. Green Acres stupidity
3. Malicious cretinism
4. Howard Sternesque
5. Mary Matalin mean
6. Gangrenous venality
7. A touch of evil
8. A cancer in the Zeitgeist
9. Et tu, Pol Pot?
10. Horseperson of the Apocalypse

N'COBRA as a group that would unite the movement's growing ranks.

Most advocates of reparations see the vast statistical disparities between white and black Americans—in areas such as education, unemployment and health morbidity—as a legacy of slavery that will persist until decisive action is taken. For them, legislation like civil rights bills and policies like affirmative action are half-hearted measures that merely postpone the necessary investment this country must make.

"Reparations is a well-established principle of international law that has been recognized and practiced in the United States," explains Nkechi Taifai, one of the conference's organizers. "We are the descendants of Africans illegally kidnapped and transported here by whites, with the explicit complicity of the U.S. government. If anyone on Earth is entitled to be compensated for historical atrocities, it is us." The reparations argument has also been made in the halls of Congress. In 1989, Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) drafted a bill calling for hearings to formally analyze the impact of 250 years of slavery and a century of Jim Crow on the lives of African-Americans. The bill has languished in the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights since Conyers' introduction.

But that was not the first time an argument for reparations had been made on Capitol Hill. The action was first advocated directly following the Civil War, when Thaddeus Stevens, George Julian and other Radical Republicans urged that former slaves be awarded "40 acres and a mule" to help establish them in the land of their old slavemasters.

—Salim Muwakkil

HUMAN RIGHTS FIGHT

Asian unionists clash with Asian governments

At the U.N. World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna last month, a bloc of Arab and Asian nations, led by China, attacked the concept of human rights. But at another conference—taking place at the same time in Hong

Kong—representatives of some 37 million workers in northeastern Asia unanimously proclaimed that human, democratic and trade union rights are universal and indivisible.

Significantly, the Hong Kong conference also endorsed trade sanctions as a legitimate tool to support these rights. The gathering included union representatives from South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Mongolia, as well as from China's outlawed Workers Autonomous Federations.

Ma Wei Pin, regional secretary of the International Unions Federation Asia/Pacific, addressing the Third Regional Conference on Trade Union, Human and Democratic Rights in Northeast Asia, said, "Human rights are different from citizens' rights. There is no requirement to qualify for such rights, and they don't depend upon laws and constitutions for their existence. But, paradoxically, they come into being only when they're claimed and struggled for." Ma called "morally wrong" the Asian regional position—which maintains that economic development takes precedence over human rights.

The conference dispatched representatives to present its views in Vienna, anxious to demonstrate that the position taken by the Asian bloc at the U.N. conference was the view only of Asia's non-democratic governments, not of the Asian people.

Because this third regional conference was held in northeast Asia, the focus was on China, the only country in the region that still bans free trade unions and routinely incarcerates union activists. If the attendees wanted evidence of the repression faced by Chinese workers, they got it in the accounts of two Workers Autonomous Federation activists who fled China after the crackdown of 1989. One woman, who still had to keep her identity anonymous to protect her family in Guangzhou, told of spending 14 months in a prison labor factory after her arrest in the crackdown. After her release, she escaped by swimming to Hong Kong, only to be forcibly repatriated and made to swim the shark-infested waters a second time.

"In China, the government has always used the excuse that foreigners should not interfere with China's internal affairs to justify its repression," she said angrily. "I hope pressure will be exerted so that monitoring organizations can be established in China."

The exiled labor activist, who now resides in Hong Kong, also attacked the common theme of American business leaders who say that American investment in China will promote democratic change there. "The foreign investors use migrant peasant labor," she said. "They offer low pay and no benefits—no housing, no meals, no medical benefits. And since these displaced peasants have no legal status where they work [China has strict residency registration requirements], they are particularly vulnerable to exploitation."

The other exiled Chinese labor activist at the conference is currently working as an organizer in New York with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. Immediately after the conference, she tested Beijing's professed openness to returning 1989 activists by flying from Hong Kong to Beijing to see her family and five-year-old daughter. Instead of being admitted back into her native land, she was grabbed, "manhandled" by 18 police officials and interrogated for more than an hour before being forcibly returned by air to Hong Kong. Though her family was waiting for her at the airport in Beijing, she was not permitted to see them.

Ma warned the unionists at the conference that China, which is experiencing increased peasant and worker restiveness in the face of mounting poverty and growing income disparity, is "on a fault line, and any time a collapse could take place." But he added, "The collapse of totalitarianism does not produce democracy. Democracy does not automatically fill a vacuum."

—Dave Lindorff

BROWN NOSING

Back-door deals at the Commerce Department

During the 1992 campaign, Bill Clinton pledged to transform the Department of Commerce from a political backwater to the key department of government responsible for formulating the country's industrial policy. But instead of appointing a prominent politician or business leader to be Secretary of Commerce, Clinton chose Ron Brown, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee and a notorious Washington influence peddler and lobbyist. In keeping with his reputation, Brown has just handed down a decision that reeks of back-door dealing.

During the 1992 campaign, Bill Clinton pledged to transform the Department of Commerce from a political backwater to the key department of government responsible for formulating the country's industrial policy. But instead of

MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

Kidfree TV

As the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) begins reading the comments submitted for its inquiry into kids TV, the evidence in favor of sterner regulation is rolling in. Some of the most startling evidence can be found in a recent study by scholar Dale Kunkel.

Looking at TV stations up for license renewal (and, since the Children's Television Act of 1990, required to submit proof they have educational children's programs), he found the average station provides a mere 3.4 hours a week for kids—and that's only if you think *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *The Jetsons* are educational. Even worse, fully half the stations either had no programming specifically for children or refused to report back. The FCC is also being spurred to seriousness by the Senate, where in hearings on TV violence Sen. Paul Simon (D-IL) demanded "a higher standard than what makes money," and Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI) threatened to have Congress devise such a standard if the industry didn't improve. Neither was impressed by industry spokespeople who argued that television has shown its social responsibility by highlighting the use of seat belts and by effectively banning smokers from otherwise violent TV dramas.

Cable cabal

For years, critics have said

that the large cable operators—also heavily invested in programming—have blocked competitors by denying them access to programming. A five-year-old investigation by attorney generals in 40 states has amassed powerful evidence of the practice. In June, the major cable operators settled with the states and agreed to provide programming at fair prices. This resolution, along with provisions in new cable legislation, may mean that cable will finally have some real competition with rival services such as satellite, "wireless cable," and, in some places, competing cable companies.

He's back

Roger Ailes, the infamous Republican PR guru, has sworn off politics for entertainment television. He's the executive producer of *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, which puts talk radio's latest bad boy on screen, and a consultant for other programs. Now he's working on, yes, *The Roger Ailes Show*. He recently told *Variety* that he's abandoned politics but not his ideology, which he intends to promote through TV.

And by the way...

If you're looking for shows to recommend to your local public radio station, consider *Second Opinion*, a weekly interview show hosted by the *Progressive's* Erwin Knoll. You can contact Knoll at (608) 257-4626.
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Two years ago, the Bush administration's International Trade Commission imposed duties on Japanese imports of flat-panel displays after it found that Japanese companies had used a dumping strategy to price American firms out of the market—selling their screens so far below cost that American investors were discouraged from supporting American manufacturers.

Apple, Compag and other American firms that relied on imported Japanese screens were outraged by the ruling. American flat-panel makers themselves advocated dropping the duties in exchange for a government program that would encourage an American display industry. But Apple and Compag demanded that the duties be revoked immediately.

Last year, Apple began doing business with Optical Imaging Systems Inc., (OIS) one of the seven American companies that brought the original complaint. Soon afterwards, OIS called for dropping the dumping complaint against the Japanese.

Apple chairman John Sculley and vice president David Barram are close friends of Clinton and Brown. Brown has stayed with Sculley when he has visited Northern California, and he asked Barram to be an assistant secretary in his department. Barram turned him down, but now Brown is reportedly trying to convince him to take the position of undersecretary of commerce. Sculley and Barram have both been actively pressuring the administration to drop the duties.

This spring, their efforts appeared to pay off. In April, the Pentagon's Advanced Research Projects Agency singled out OIS for a \$50 million research award to build a flat-panel display factory. Then on June 21, Brown announced that the Commerce Department was dropping its duties against the Japanese suppliers. Other flat-panel display makers now suspect—with good reason—that Sculley and Barram engineered a deal with Brown on behalf on themselves and OIS. In the short run, this deal will benefit Apple and OIS, but in the long run the prime beneficiaries will be the Japanese, who will continue to control 95 percent of the industry.

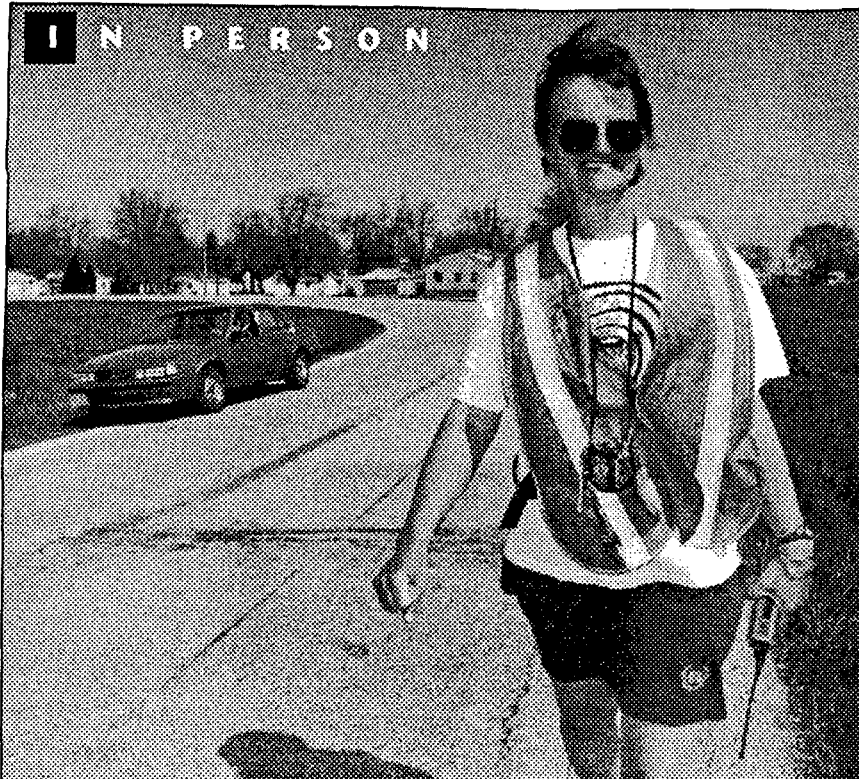
—John B. Judis

ROUGH CUTS

JA REID



IN PERSON



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ONE WOMAN'S WALKATHON

Judith Hyde walks and talks AIDS

covering 10 miles a day on a journey to alert Americans that the disease that killed Leonard can kill anyone.

"I haven't gone through a community yet where I haven't found someone infected with HIV or who has a family member with HIV," says Hyde, who has marched from Oregon to Illinois, visiting towns and villages. The virus carries a heavy stigma in the countryside, but as a woman just passing through, she says, "I'm safe to tell these things to."

According to the National Rural AIDS Network, AIDS cases per capita are increasing faster in rural areas than in cities. But small-town America still considers the disease an urban problem—a plague on gay men and drug users. In communities that refuse to acknowledge AIDS, information on the disease is scarce, as is support and treatment for sufferers.

Hyde, who describes herself as a radical, expected to be stoned by Bible thumpers and shot at by rednecks as she carried her AIDS prevention message into the Heartland. Her pessimism about the American people soon dissolved. At every stop she has found compassion and help.

"In the very beginning, when I walk into a room people say, 'What are you talking about that for? Who cares? It's a lifestyle. They deserve it,'" says Hyde, who speaks to Jaycees, church groups, college students, postal employees, anyone who will lend an ear. "When I leave the room, they don't say that."

In Stratton, Colo. (population 650), Hyde was first inspected by the mayor's wife, then asked to give a two-hour talk at a local church. Fifteen people showed up for the speech, including the local pastor's wife, who

After her friend Leonard died of AIDS, Judith Hyde took a walk to deal with her sorrow. The 49-year-old letter carrier set out from her house in Portland, Ore., last August and has been walking ever since,

ETC.

By Miles Harvey

Freeze at last

As *In These Times* went to press, the Clinton administration was set to announce an extension, for up to one year, of its moratorium on nuclear testing. The nine-month moratorium took effect last October.

The administration has also decided that when the extension expires no U.S. tests will occur until another country tests first. (Congress has passed a permanent ban on U.S. nuclear testing that takes effect Sept. 30, 1996.)

The announcement may pave the way for an end to all nuclear testing under a worldwide Comprehensive Test Ban (CTB) treaty, according to anti-nuclear activists, who were elated by the White House action.

Kevin Martin, executive director of the Illinois wing of Peace Action, hailed Clinton's move as the biggest victory in the history of his organization, which began in 1957 under the name Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. Peace Action and other anti-nuclear groups had been furiously lobbying the administration and Congress—forcing Clinton to abandon plans for resumed testing and for a watered-down CTB. (See "Etc." May 17 and June 14.)

"The military-industrial complex got shot down on this one. That never happens," said a jubilant Martin. "There's no doubt in my mind most of the people within the administration and within the military complex wanted to resume testing," continued Martin.

But, as one senior administra-

tion official told the *Washington Post*, "We got a pretty strong message from the Hill and from editorial pages not to test." And so a well-organized coalition of CTB proponents was able to take advantage of Clinton's renowned eagerness to please, convincing the president to go against many of his advisers. As Martin pointed out, "If Bush was still president, we wouldn't have had access." Bob Musil—director of policy and programs for Physicians for Social Responsibility, which has been working for a CTB since 1961—said Clinton's decision was simply good politics.

"The president has a lot to gain by stopping testing," explained Musil. "It's a transcendent issue. It's one of those vision things. The president is supposed to think big. When you weigh the ability to look like JFK [who halted above-ground nuclear testing 30 years ago] versus looking like a narrow policy wonk, it's clearly to the president's advantage to be a leader."

In addition to laying the groundwork for a CTB, the move is expected to have an immediate international impact. Russia and France, which have not conducted tests for more than a year, are expected to follow the U.S. lead and enact no-first-test policies. The U.S. moratorium also affects the British, since the United States conducts Great Britain's testing. China has not conducted tests since last September. But analysts say its future testing plans are more uncertain.

believed people with AIDS deserved death.

"I talked for 50 minutes on why I decided to walk across America and about my journey and then left it open for questions," she says. "After the meeting, [the pastor's wife] filled out a form for the church to send away for information so they could start an AIDS education program." And Stratton's superintendent of schools, who was also at the church, agreed to expand his district's AIDS program to include information on preventive measures other than abstinence.

As Hyde walks, she sometimes whispers, "This one's for you, Leonard." Leonard was a member of a family support group that she established at the Cascades AIDS Project in Oregon. When Leonard was dying of AIDS, he asked the principal at his son's suburban elementary school for permission to speak to the students about his illness. The school refused, saying that since there were no other cases in the district, AIDS wasn't a community issue.

"They didn't want to talk about it," Hyde says. "They think silence will make it go away." Leonard died in October 1991—the same week basketball player Magic Johnson revealed he was infected with HIV. Hyde says the talk around the post office where she works was, "I didn't know Magic was gay. And I said, 'Jeez, they still don't get that it's not a gay disease.'"

The week of Leonard's death, Hyde decided to walk across America. She got a year's unpaid leave from the post office. "People ask me what I did to get ready for the trip physically," says Hyde. "I answer, 'I delivered my route.'" On August 30 she left Portland with \$2 in her pocket. She hasn't needed much cash. Hotels and members of the letter carriers union donate beds, restaurants feed her and a postal uniform company has outfitted her with cold-weather gear. Of the \$25,000 in donations she's collected along the way, almost all of it has gone to the National Community AIDS Partnership.

"As I'm walking across this country, I find people who still believe you can get AIDS from a dish," she says. Although she wishes she didn't have to do so, when Hyde walks into a new town, she assures people she doesn't have the disease she's marching against. "Once they realize I don't have AIDS, then I become a safe person," she said. "Hell, I look like a schoolmarm. Who's gonna be threatened by me?"

Walking down old U.S. 36 near Illiopolis, Ill., Hyde wears a pair of floppy shorts, a T-shirt, an orange safety vest reading "Judith's Journey" and a tangle of necklaces that includes her lucky rabbit's foot. Those are her only traveling clothes. She wore them when she was presented to the Illinois Legislature, but when she met the governor of Kansas, she donned a dress borrowed from a woman in Abilene.

"I really thought I'd have rocks thrown at me," she said. "I was warned all through Oregon that I should be careful in Idaho, because the Aryan Nations are there. They said I should wear a bulletproof vest. Everybody was wonderful to me in Idaho, and they started warning me about Utah, because it's a Mormon state where AIDS is not a recognized disease. Everybody was wonderful to me in Utah, and they started warning me about Wyoming: 'They're all cowboys....'"

And so it went: a warning in one state, new friends in the next. Hyde plans to arrive in Washington, D.C., on August 17, where she hopes to ask President Bill Clinton to mandate AIDS education for every classroom in the nation. Even if she never gets inside the White House, Hyde won't feel she walked 2,900 miles for nothing.

"What I have done out here is the important part," she says. "The prize is not going to come from Washington, D.C. The prize is going to come from people out here who may have saved a life."

—Ted Kleine

THE ECONOMY

Putting People Last

Clinton's budget reveals that he is turning into the most unabashedly pro-business president since Calvin Coolidge.

By John B. Judis
WASHINGTON D.C.

In winning Senate passage of his budget, President Bill Clinton scored a purely Pyrrhic victory. Like the budget passed by the House of Representatives in May, this one probably won't help the economy and definitely won't help Clinton or the Democrats get re-elected. Otherwise, it's fine.

The budget can be judged according to Clinton's own estimate of what needed to be done. In his campaign manifesto, *Putting People First*, and in his February 17 address to Congress, Clinton called for combining deficit reduction with public spending and incentives to spur new private investment, create jobs, rebuild the country's aging infrastructure and upgrade the educational system.

The two parts of Clinton's program complemented each other. Deficit reduction was necessary to keep interest rates down and to protect the value of the dol-

lar, while tax incentives and public investments were necessary to restructure the economy so that the U.S. could compete with East Asian and Western European countries. Spending increases were also necessary to mitigate the recessionary effect of deficit reduction on the economy.

Yet the budgets passed by the Senate and House are strong on deficit reduction and weak on investment and incentives. The Senate and House budgets use tax increases and some spending cuts to bring the deficit from 6 percent of gross domestic product to 3 percent by 1997. At the same time they slash 70 percent off Clinton's proposals for "lifelong learning" or worker retraining. The Senate budget axes tax subsidies for research and development. And both budgets limit spending on infrastructure to what it would have been if George Bush had been re-elected.

The cuts in infrastructure are particularly telling. During the campaign, Clinton called for spending \$20 billion a year over four years for "rebuilding America." But in his February

17 speech, he proposed only \$35 billion over four years, or less than half of his original plan. And in the House and Senate budgets, Clinton has agreed to even less—\$20 billion over four years, a fourth of what he originally proposed. Further, most of the increases are in the highway program—exactly the kind of expenditures that Bush favored.

Clinton's programs for directly creating jobs have also been virtually eliminated. In the Senate bill, only 3 percent of the \$16.3 billion Clinton requested for economic stimulus is retained—at a time when the Federal Reserve is reporting new signs of sluggishness in the economy. A measure to encourage investment in inner cities was also eliminated by the Senate.

Now both budgets go to a House-Senate conference committee, where they will be combined into a single budget that will be voted up or down by both houses. If the debate in the separate chambers is any indication, the result will reflect less a coherent economic philosophy than the diverse powers of special interests.

As matters stand, the House and Senate budgets send mixed signals to the economy. For instance, the original BTU tax, passed by the House, would encourage industry to become more fuel efficient—although by the time it was passed, many industries had been exempted from its provisions. The House also funded more energy efficient forms of transportation, including high-speed rail.

The Senate, though, eliminated the BTU tax and passed only a 4.3 cent per gallon gasoline tax, which is probably too small to encourage conservation of energy. At the same time, it increased the highway fund and eliminated tax incentives for high-speed rail. The House's bill would shift toward energy conservation (although only sporadically),



while the Senate's would reward the least efficient modes of energy consumption.

In their focus on deficit reduction and their lack of any industrial strategy, the Clinton-Democratic budgets closely resemble the Bush budget that Congress passed in November 1990. Like that budget, these will probably have a slightly negative effect on business investment.

The Clinton-Democratic budgets are also a political disaster. Clinton based much of his campaign on the promise of a middle-class tax cut, but about 30 percent of new tax revenues will come from tax increases on the middle class. The Republicans will run against these tax increases in 1994 and 1996—and will probably win.

Clinton would have had to raise taxes on the middle class eventually—if he wanted to reduce the deficit and increase spending on health, infrastructure and education. But he could have lessened the political fallout from the move.

He could have fought to preserve the energy tax as a conservation measure rather than simply as a revenue booster. That's the way he presented it on February 17, and the public accepted it. Or he could have combined the tax increases with a populist attack on Wall Street speculation and conspicuous consumption that would have demonstrated to average Americans that he was still on their side.

But Clinton didn't follow any of these alternatives. He allowed the budget debate to get swallowed up in the details. When challenged by powerful lobbies, he and the Democrats quickly withdrew or watered down plans to discourage the unproductive accumulation of great wealth. And Clinton retreated on his campaign pledge to eliminate the tax deduction for CEO salaries of over a million a year.

Then he and the Democrats backed down from their pledge to eliminate Sallie Mae, the private boondoggle that makes money off government-guaranteed student loans. Instead, the House and Senate decided to phase in a direct government loan program over five years and to limit it to 50 percent of Sallie Mae's business. There's no excuse for

that except to keep a few bankers drawing multimillion-dollar salaries.

And, with Clinton's acquiescence, the House and Senate provided new tax breaks that will actually encourage more corporate takeovers. *Financial World* jubilantly described the Democrats' new takeover tax loophole as "the Investment Bankers Relief Act of 1993." It allows companies that buy other companies to deduct from their taxes not only the value of the "tangible assets" they purchase, such as plant and equipment, but also such

"intangible assets" as "goodwill." Companies can now assign huge values to brand-name recognition and customer appreciation in calculating the tax advantages of a takeover.

What has happened to Clinton and the Democrats? Secretary of Labor Robert Reich and other liberals within the administration privately blame what they call the "Gang of Four"—Secretary of the Treasury Lloyd Bentsen, National Economic Council director Robert Rubin, Director of the Office of Management and Budget Leon Panetta and Associate Budget Director Alice Rivlin—for moving the budget toward deficit reduction and away from public investment. But the Gang of Four's ascendancy reflects Clinton's own priorities.

Clinton is turning into the most unabashedly pro-business president since Calvin Coolidge. While he rarely meets with labor leaders and only hobnobs with the general public under the glare of television lights, he meets privately every Wednesday with CEOs and bankers. Clinton and Bentsen have been far less critical of Wall Street speculation than were Bush and his Secretary of the Treasury Nicholas Brady. In 1992, for example, Brady opposed the takeover loophole that the Democrats passed this year.

Many Democrats in Congress have also displayed little stomach for going up against business and financial lobbies. In the Senate Finance Committee, Kent Conrad (D-ND) and Max Baucus (D-MT) proposed defraying the loss of income from abandoning the BTU tax by raising the corporate income tax from 35 to 36 percent. But committee Democrats, led by Bill Bradley (D-NJ), opted instead for eliminating tax incentives to the cities and the poor. In the Senate Labor and Education Committee, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) led the retreat on Sallie Mae.

The House and Senate budgets do not represent a triumph for the Democrats, but a looming disaster. Their budgets do not put people first, but big business and Wall Street. The Republicans will hang these budget votes around Clinton's neck in the same way that Democrats hung the 1990 budget around Bush's.

BLACK AMERICA

Faith no more

B

lack leaders have not exactly declared war on the Clinton administration, but many of them have made it clear that they can no longer be counted as loyal allies. In fact, President Clinton has been targeted for criticism from such a wide spectrum of African-American leadership that the current mood may mark a defining moment in the black movement.

The revitalized Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) has set its targets on legislation dear to Clinton's heart—from the North American Free Trade Agreement, to the budget compromise, to Russian aid—and changed its tune from deference to defiance. The civil rights community—including new NAACP head the Rev. Benjamin Chavis, who served on Clinton's transition team—is urging the CBC on and adding its own list of indictments.

Black leaders are looking at Clinton with a new defiance. But where can they take their anger?

By Salim Muwakkil

Displeasure with the president has been building in the African-American community since he reversed his position on Haitian refugees in the dawning days of his tenure, but Clinton's June 3 dumping of Lani Guinier was the proverbial last straw. Up until then, many black elected officials were reluctant to bash the first Democratic administration after 12 barren years of Republican rule. But the president's shabby treatment of a longtime friend and his willful, transparently expedient distortion of Guinier's nuanced legal arguments angered even his strongest black supporters. Writer Roger Wilkins traces the blame to David Gergen, the former Republican spin doctor who was hired to gently escort the Clinton administration down the rightward path.

But no matter where the responsibility lies, the action has provoked hoots of disapproval from most black organizers even as it has probably improved Clinton's ratings in the polls. The CBC, until now one of Clinton's most supportive voting blocs, had been stew-

ing for months, infuriated by Clinton's turnaround on the issue of Haitian immigrants, his cave-in on the economic stimulus package, his backstepping on addressing the problems of the cities (where 58 percent of the black population lives) and other such acts of expediency. But the Guinier episode did the trick. In a gesture designed to demonstrate its collective disgust, the CBC refused a meeting with the president.

"This wasn't just about Lani Guinier," explained Rep. Kweisi Mfume (D-MD), CBC chairman. "This was about a pattern of action that seems to indicate that black people are not important to the Clinton administration." Clearly upset by Clinton's about-face, Mfume announced that the "days of second-class citizenship are over." Refusing a presidential invitation certainly conveyed the CBC's strong disapproval of Clinton's action, but it also highlighted black politicians' limited range of options.

It's ironic, certainly, that the members of the CBC would deny themselves White House access after 12 years of complaining that Republicans denied them that access. But what else can the CBC do with its aroused sense of indignation—vote with the obstructionist Republicans? While black leadership has made its anger known, its strategic response is confined to the limiting arena of two-party politics. One reason I believe black elected officials are so critical of Clinton's action is that it starkly reveals the demeaning political context of their peculiar dilemma.

Black politicians, be they Democrat or Republican, clearly understand that in national politics it is more expedient to exploit racist symbols than to challenge them. Black Republicans had to grin and bear it when George Bush utilized his Willie Horton strategy to cow Democrat Michael Dukakis into political paralysis. Black Democrats had to shuffle right



When it comes to issues important to African-Americans, Clinton has been looking the other way.

Jesse Jackson-organized event to show that he wasn't intimidated by the Jesse mystique.

Mainstream political analysts have long been urging the Democratic Party to distance itself from so-called black issues in order to win national elections. According to this view, the white electorate has grown tired of what it considers special pleading and will strongly oppose politicians who lend credibility to those pleadings. Thus, when right-wing ideologue Clint Bolick dubbed Guinier a "quota queen" in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, the die was cast. Bolick's characterization pushed all the right racial buttons, and it was only a matter of time before the Democrats joined the Republicans in a bipartisan exercise of American political tradition.

"Clinton's treatment of Guinier—and, by extension, the black community—is a replay of our whole history in this country," says William Strickland, political science profes-

sor along when Gov. Clinton executed Rickey Ray Rector, a retarded black man, to neutralize the "Horton effect" during the presidential race. And they had to turn a blind eye when Clinton dissed rap performer Sister Souljah at a

Jesse Jackson-organized event to show that he wasn't intimidated by the Jesse mystique.

African-American critics of Clinton find it difficult to understand why others are surprised by the president's action. After all, they argue, he campaigned as a so-called New Democrat and touted the virtues of the center-right Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), of which he was a leading member. Why would Clinton change his tune once in the White House?

But according to Frank Watkins, a longtime Jackson aide and a leading strategist in the National Rainbow Coalition (NRC), Clinton actually campaigned on issues to the left of the DLC. Gay rights and the "motor voter" bill were hardly DLC issues, Watkins points out. "[Clinton] promised to put people back to work, admit Haitians to our land, provide universal health care and tax people fairly," Watkins continues. "That was a progressive, not a centrist, agenda, so of course we're disappointed with many of the choices he's made thus far."

James Jennings, director of the William Monroe Trotter Institute at the University of Massachusetts at Boston and

author of several books on racial politics, says black Democrats should have expected Clinton's duplicity. "In my opinion, the so-called Sister Souljah incident and Clinton's carefully timed execution of a black, retarded prisoner in Arkansas were racial symbols used for political gain," Jennings says. "By those actions, Clinton was assuring the white electorate that he would not challenge America's racial hierarchy."

But many black Clinton supporters insisted that Clinton was playing the race-baiting game just to win the White House and that he would remove his villain disguise once safely ensconced. And although few still believe that scenario, some black elected officials remain supportive of the president's actions. Rep. John Lewis (D-GA) notes that Clinton has appointed several blacks to subcabinet posts. Furthermore, Lewis notes, Clinton already has signed the motor voter and family leave bills, moved to end discrimination in the military and taken many steps to assure that more progressive policies be enacted through various governmental agencies.

But even the president's supporters have advised African-Americans not to put too much responsibility for their well-being on Clinton, and the Guinier episode seems to have accelerated the realization that he was not the white knight for whom so many had foolishly hoped. Unfortunately, that vain hope is one of African-Americans' most persistent illusions. White political candidates seeking black votes traditionally have presented themselves as shining liberal saviors forced to assume a racist guise for the sake of victory.

In the April 1993 edition of the *Progressive*, Adolph Reed Jr., a professor of political science at Northwestern University, recounts his anecdotal version of that tradition. "When I was a kid and a young teenager, I remember quite vividly, 'liberal' candidates for office would approach the illegally limited black electorate for support by representing themselves as secret friends of black interest. 'Of course, I'll have to call you niggers when I'm campaigning in North Louisiana ... and other such places,' the standard tale went, 'but you should realize that I don't really mean it; I just have to do it to get elected.'"

Many members of the CBC who bought a similar logic and actively campaigned for Clinton are reacting angrily to what many of them call an outright betrayal. Rep. Charles

Rangel (D-NY), one of the CBC's savviest members, has even been exploring possible alliances with House Republicans. "Republicans are a minority party out of power, and they need to find new alliances," Rangel explains. "Why should we limit our contacts to members of a party that regularly disrespects us?"

There's been some talk about the possibility of renewing a strategy that was dear to the heart of the late Republican strategist Lee Atwater: aggressively recruiting blacks into the Republican Party. An "editorial notebook" by Brent Staples in the June 21 edition of the *New York Times* urges the Republicans to make the effort. "The GOP needs to understand that middle-class blacks—conservative, often exclusionist—are natural Republican timber," Staples wrote. "If made welcome, they'd eventually come streaming in."

Staples, one of the *Times'* few black editors, may be right. But there's little evidence that blacks are leaning in Republican directions. Some polls have shown, however, that African-Americans are less loyal in their support for the Democratic Party.

But most observers consider a CBC-GOP alliance improbable at best. Black Democrats may be able to stymie some of Clinton's initiatives by temporarily joining hands with Republicans, but there's little possibility of a long-term strategy; the two groups' ideological differences are too significant.

And anyway, the CBC's clout is at an all-time high. The group is larger than ever, with 40 members, including

one senator. The group also contains high-ranking members of several congressional committees, and with 10 women members, the CBC is also developing interlocking interests with other congressional caucuses. On its own strength, the CBC can cause the president serious problems. There is speculation that the CBC will oppose the president on aid to Russia and perhaps on campaign finance reform. There are other opportunities for the CBC to apply its leverage. But, according to David Bositis, a senior analyst with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, "the CBC will not cut off its nose to spite its face. Clinton's positive proposals will receive their overwhelming support."

Black leaders are in a bind: most political analysts would



The NAACP's Benjamin Chavis is frustrated with Clinton's backstepping.

agree that the black electorate generally is taken for granted by the Democrats and ignored by the Republicans. Since being taken for granted is somewhat better than being ignored, most African-Americans are Democrats these days.

The disrespectful attitudes of the two major parties springs from the conventional wisdom that devalues the need for black support and demonizes political liberalism. But in the view of many researchers, that wisdom is at odds with the facts. Clinton actually owes his election to solid support from African-American and Hispanic voters, says Bositis.

According to the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, 39 percent of the white vote, 82 percent of the black vote and 62 percent of the Latino vote combined to give Clinton the 43 percent of the total vote that provided his winning margin. The president would have lost Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and New Jersey with just a few less black votes. He won a majority of the votes only in Arkansas (53 percent) and predominantly black Washington, D.C. (85 percent). And, as the NRC's Watkins points out, voter enthusiasm in many black communities was generated by the presence of black candidates running in newly redistricted elections.

So in his bid for higher poll numbers, Clinton is ignoring the interests of the very people responsible for his victory and embracing the reasoning of the people he vanquished. The president's advisers presumably have concluded that the CBC, though angered, has absolutely nowhere to go.

Jennings agrees with that assessment. He is convinced that progress on eliminating poverty and racial hierarchy is impossible within the context of the two parties, both of which are controlled by corporate interests. Jennings calls for the creation of an independent third party as the only way to challenge business as usual: "A third party encompassing independent politics at the local, state and national levels is now essential in order to effectively challenge the philosophical tendencies and policies of the Democratic and Republican parties regarding social welfare, economic growth and development and foreign affairs."

Not surprisingly, Jennings' argument is resonating strongly these days. At the annual National Rainbow Coalition leadership conference, held last month, Jackson urged delegates from several states to begin pushing for independent local initiatives, regardless of the Democratic Party's position. Many left organizers are intensifying efforts once

again to convince Jackson of the need for an independent third party. Jackson's celebrity and the vestigial organizational structure of his lumbering NRC still provide perhaps the best vehicle for left—or "progressive"—political organizing.

Sensing the independent mood at large, Jackson tantalized the conferees at the NRC affair with hints about possible independent forays here and there. And he urged those in attendance to aggressively challenge the DLC line that the party has to move to the right to be successful.

Some black analysts have concluded that Clinton is a lost cause who is totally beholden to corporate interests that control the two major parties. But others hold the belief that he can be influenced by well-crafted and politically expedient arguments—and that it is their duty to come up with the arguments.

Ever hopeful, Strickland urges left organizers to harness the widespread anger provoked by Guinier's treatment to energize more effective political coalitions. He sees this growing disenchantment with Clinton as an opportunity to strengthen old political links and establish new ones. "The coalition that formed to support Clinton was wide-ranging and energetic. If we can build on something like that, we may be able to use Clinton's repeated cave-ins as motivational tools."

THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

by Peter Hannan



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Photo by David Schulz

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Making peace practical

W

The Economic Conversion Project of Maine is doing whatever it takes to ease the state's dependence on Pentagon spending.

By Randy Wilson
FALMOUTH, MAINE

hen peace activists breached the chain-link security fence at the Bath Iron Works shipyard several years ago and spray-painted slogans on a destroyer under construction, Susan Schweppe had a feeling the protesters weren't from Maine.

"I was right," she recalls. "They were from Maryland."

Schweppe's group, the Economic Conversion Project (ECP), is on the cutting edge of the post-Cold War peace movement. Its mission is to end Maine's reliance on defense-related manufacturing, but to do so without causing massive social dislocation. That's a tall order for a state in which fully 10 percent of personal income and 8 percent of all jobs are tied directly or indirectly to defense spending. To make

it happen, Schweppe and the ECP have often had to veer from the peace movement's traditional tactics of confrontation. Candlelight vigils have largely been supplanted by face-to-face bargaining in corporate boardrooms—sometimes to the dismay of Schweppe's longtime allies.

"Some [peace activists]—but only a few—think that direct action is the only solution and that you must be a sellout if you sit down at the same table with a defense contractor," says Eric Johnson, former director of the Maine Peace Campaign, who led a referendum campaign against cruise missile testing over Maine. "I know it hurt Susie when [the shipyard vandalism] happened, but it's not an either/or choice, it's both/and. Some are moved by people willing to get arrested; others are reached by more mainstream tactics."

So mainstream, in fact, has Maine's peace effort become that the ECP counts among its board members a high-ranking Bath Iron Works executive and a manager with another large defense contractor.

Arms makers and arms opponents alike have been won over to the cause of conversion, thanks in great part to the toll defense

cutbacks are taking on the state's economy. By some estimates, Maine has already lost 7,000 of its 63,000 defense-related jobs since 1989, and an equal number could be lost in the next two years.

"It's in our best long-term interests not to lose our manufacturing capacity," Schweppe says. "We will all pay for it in the loss of taxes and talents. Defense conversion is just a starting point for making tough decisions about what makes a sustainable economy and how do we get there."

In this state, it is the ECP that is leading the way toward making those tough decisions. With Schweppe serving as a one-woman information clearinghouse and coordinator for a network of peace, labor, community development and social welfare groups, the ECP convinced Maine Gov. John McKernan Jr. to establish one of the first state task forces on defense realignment in the country. Schweppe was invited last December to brief the Clinton presidential transition team on defense conversion issues, and ECP board member Nicholas Karvonides delivered a briefing on conversion at a U.N.-sponsored international disarmament conference in New York in April.

Practically speaking, Schweppe is the Economic Conversion Project, churning out newsletters and setting up congressional hearings on defense layoffs from an office in her home in Falmouth, outside Portland. She taps the grass roots by working with other peace groups in Maine's Real Security Coalition on projects like this year's federal spending priorities poll, in which volunteers fanned out across the state at tax time armed with nickels, asking Mainers to fill

up coin tubes labeled with their preferred federal spending area. (The winners were environment, education and debt reduction.) Voters at town meetings all over Maine last year endorsed an ECP-sponsored "Reinvest in Hometown America" resolution that drove home the link between defense downsizing and better use of federal tax dollars.

"No one size fits all," says Johnson of Schweppe's creative approaches to educating people about conversion issues. "You have to get all the stakeholders involved, not just the peaceniks. Otherwise, you're just talking to yourself."

Funded by a patchwork quilt of foundation grants that until this year amounted to less than \$75,000 annually, Schweppe and a board that includes a union organizer, university economist, state legislator, teacher and defense industry worker have made education and outreach a priority. The ECP organized an economic policy roundtable among business leaders and helped start four regional task forces on conversion in areas of the state with heavy defense employment. It co-sponsored a public television documentary on economic change and awarded "sustainable stars" in its newsletter to state policy-makers and others who tackle tough conversion issues, a feature that has been picked up in several newspapers.

One of the ECP's primary tasks has been to disseminate to a lay audience what economists have known for years: that defense spending, while providing relatively high-paying jobs, produces fewer jobs and less economic growth than other industries. That's because its products—tanks, warships, warplanes—are not used to make or develop other sectors of the economy. In other words, defense spending is a dead end. According to one 1989 study, a \$1 billion defense appropriation that buys 20,000 jobs in guided missile production would buy 30,000 jobs in the auto industry and 71,000 jobs in education.

Schweppe made that point in 1990 with the help of a Michigan-based economic consulting team that produced for the ECP a highly publicized report showing that Maine would reap a net increase of \$200 million in federal funds and millions more in spin-off spending if the defense budget was cut 7 percent in each of the next four years.

But such long-term logic has been tested in the wake of the government's 1991 decision to close Loring Air Force Base, which will result in 5,000 immediate job losses when the shutdown goes into effect next year. Critics have pointed out that even though more federal money might eventually be spent on health care, education and transportation—so-called sustainable industries—such investments still won't cushion the shock that will be felt by unemployed defense industry workers who are not trained in those fields.

Schweppe and her board agreed. As a result, the ECP has been working at the federal level to get income subsidies, health care, psychological support and job training for dislocated families. But Schweppe has found Washington to be particularly unreceptive to the plight of these workers. "The human element is really lost," she says. "We're talking about

real people with real families, and all of a sudden they're on the street with no support for them."

Another reason Schweppe says peace groups in particular should be concerned about finding new jobs for defense workers is the risk that defense companies will simply find foreign markets for their weapons if the Pentagon well dries up. In the last two years, foreign arms sales by U.S. manufacturers have risen 60 percent, and one of the leading exporters has been Maremont Industries, parent company of Maine-based Saco Defense, a maker of machine guns.

Among defense contractors, it hasn't hurt Schweppe's credibility that the head of Maine's biggest defense employer, Duane "Buzz" Fitzgerald of Bath Iron Works, happens to be an early convert to the cause of defense realignment. As early as 1989, Fitzgerald was making headlines with statements like, "Making peace can be more profitable than war," and he hasn't backed off, despite a backlog of 14 ship contracts with the Defense Department.

"I've always thought of Susie as a good spokesman for a point of view that she has always made; it's just become more popular in the last year or two," says Fitzgerald. "She is never shrill and she is always willing to listen."

Part of the reason for Schweppe's ready acceptance by business, labor and political groups may be because she was never part of the confrontational wing of the peace movement. Arriving in Maine in 1973, she was active in the United Church of Christ while raising three children, and she was introduced to disarmament issues by her minister. Unlike the campus-based peace movement of the '60s and early '70s, the Maine Peace Mission of the mid-'80s had its roots in suburbia among the families of doctors and lawyers and other professionals.

What was unusual about Schweppe from the start is what Johnson calls her "extraordinary skill" at finding a common basis for dialogue on peace issues and recruiting people to her cause. At the height of the Maine Peace Mission's weekly trips to Washington to lobby members of Maine's congressional delegation, more than 200 members were part of a weekly revolving flight pool of 10 to 15 people.

But with the Cold War winding down, Schweppe says she became concerned about the local impact when the arms race ended, a problem she did not feel the peace movement should walk away from. So, as she had done on disarmament and its arcane vocabulary of throw weights and payloads, Schweppe educated herself about the economics of the defense industry and the federal budget and formed the Economic Conversion Project as a vehicle for starting a dialogue and a network, this time in Maine, not on Capitol Hill.

That dialogue has reached a sophisticated level, with economic development experts debating which types of defense industries might be worth saving. Fitzgerald, the shipyard executive in charge of 8,600 employees, contends that some conversion advocates fail to distinguish between defense spending that underwrites the training of skills useful to a peace economy and truly dead-end Pentagon spending. "Each defense dollar spent is not like every other one,"

says Fitzgerald. "Cutting the defense budget may not be as simple as it appears to be."

Fitzgerald is critical of conversion advocates who make simplistic assumptions about the ability of his shipyard to convert from military to civilian ships. "Combatant and commercial shipbuilding are similar only because both products float," he says.

He also is fearful that by talking about conversion imprecisely, advocates may be writing off a key sector of the Maine economy—manufacturing—in favor of service-sector areas, such as tourism. He points out that a study by the Economic Policy Institute found that for every 100 jobs in manufacturing, there are 220 jobs created among suppliers, compared to only 58 supplier jobs created by personal and business services and 29 created by retail stores.

Nicholas Karvonides, a marketing manager for Fiber Materials, Inc., of Biddeford, a developer of high-tech composite materials for missiles and space vehicles, echoes some of Fitzgerald's concern over the difficulty in making the transition from military to civilian production. Karvonides, a board member of ECP, says it is not so much the retraining of skilled technical workers that is essential to conversion as a "top-to-bottom retooling and reorganization" of a company.

That kind of reorganization takes time and money if layoffs are to be avoided, he says, and that's where federal and state aid can come in. The Industrial Policy Group of the Maine Economic Growth Council, on which Karvonides served, recommended the creation of a full-time Office of Economic Conversion with an annual budget of \$170,000,



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Susan Schweppe

a proposal that Gov. McKernan cut by \$100,000 and submitted to the legislature.

"Maine used to be considered a leader on conversion issues, but all I see now is a lot of lip service when what people need now is action," he says.

Even more troubling, according to both Karvonides and Schweppe, is the absence of a long-range economic development strategy for Maine that identifies an industrial policy and sticks to it, as recommended strongly by the Industrial Policy Group.

"Conversion is really about adopting a new industrial policy," Karvonides says. "If defense is your third largest industry and the federal defense budget is going to be cut by more than \$100 billion over the next five years, you need a new industrial policy to replace it."

Still, with the groundwork laid among private companies and regional task forces, Schweppe says she is confident Maine will be able to tap its fair share of the \$1.7 billion President Clinton has proposed nationwide for state and local conversion aid in the next fiscal year. She serves now as an informal state clearinghouse for companies seeking information on conversion assistance, and she is likely to continue in that role if a full-time state coordinating office goes unfunded.

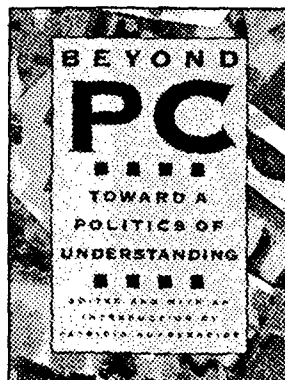
One of the biggest challenges, however, may be political, Schweppe acknowledges. The huge federal budget deficit may eat up the peace dividend unless conversion advocates can convince lawmakers that spending money now will not only ease the social dislocation of the defense build-down but will stimulate a key sector of the economy—high-tech manufacturing—as well.

"It may be time to think again about weekly trips to Washington, D.C.," Schweppe muses. ◀

Randy Wilson is a reporter for the *Maine Times*. For more information, write: Economic Conversion Project, Thornhurst Rd., Falmouth, ME 04105.

BEYOND PC: Toward a politics of understanding

Edited and with an introduction by Patricia Aufderheide, Senior Editor, ITT



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R U S S I A

Prelude to a czar?

T

he simmering power struggle journalists have dubbed the "war of the constitutions" is reaching its climax. Though the winner cannot yet be confidently forecast, the likely loser is all too obvious: Russia's fragile four-year-old experiment in democracy.

The biggest threat to stabilizing Russia comes from the free-market reformers led by Boris Yeltsin.

By Fred Weir
MOSCOW

Following a well-trodden Russian path, the political process is careening onto extralegal ground. President Boris Yeltsin, on the offensive, is urgently seeking a knockout punch that will neutralize his political opponents and enable him to acquire sweeping powers to reshape Russia's economy and society in a new ideological image.

Over the past year, resistance to Yeltsin has hardened in the 1,033-seat Congress of People's Deputies, Russia's legislature. Congress leaders have sharply criticized the

effects of economic "shock therapy" and in March even came close to impeaching the president. But in April, Yeltsin defeated the Congress in a public referendum, in which 58 percent of voters declared "trust" in the president and 53 percent favored his economic and social policies.

Citing that result, Yeltsin moved beyond the bounds of Russia's established legal order. In May he decreed the formation of a constitutional assembly, consisting of appointed delegates from various sectors of the Russian elite, to reshape the national balance of power.

Yeltsin supporters insist there is no choice but to sidestep the conservative-dominated Congress, which they allege has lost its legitimacy and no longer represents the will of the people. None of the assembly's 700 delegates, however, was elected by the population to rewrite Russia's fundamental law. Most were directly or indirectly appointed by Yeltsin, who personally chaired every session and was the prime author of the only constitutional scheme up for discussion.

The assembly has no legal force, a fact that has led some observers to dismiss it as a bizarre byproduct of Russia's pernicious power vacuum. When it opened on June 5, it quickly ran into heavy weather: Yeltsin's main rival, parliamentary speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, was jeered and booed out of the hall on the opening day, and independence-minded regional leaders bogged the proceedings down indefinitely by demanding more local power than the central government is prepared to concede. Like many past Yeltsin efforts to whip Russia into shape, the constitutional assembly could yet just dribble away and be forgotten in the torpor of another Moscow summer.

Nevertheless, a skeptic is entitled to read the episode with alarm. The very existence of a state-managed, handpicked body rubber-stamping the president's wishes is a jolting echo of Russia's past and a disturbing warning about its future.

Russia is slipping into a familiar authoritarianism, but not, as commonly supposed, because pro-communist revanchists are plotting against its embryonic democratic institutions. That threat may be real enough, yet today's main danger comes from impatient free-market reformers, led by Yeltsin, who are gradually allowing themselves to be seduced by an old Russian delusion: only a "good czar," or benign dictator, can drag this sinful nation from its backwardness into the light of the modern, civilized world.

On the surface, the battle rages over dry legalisms: what sort of constitution should replace the old Soviet-era document that still functions as the nation's fundamental law? That charter has been amended almost 300 times in the past two years. The leading role of the Communist Party was expunged, key human rights clauses added and a Western-style division of powers between executive, legislature and

judiciary grafted on. The result is a cumbersome and often ambivalent instrument, but most legal experts agree that it remains a workable one. Indeed, in Soviet times the main complaint of democrats wasn't that it was a bad constitution, but rather that it was a pretty fiction.

Yeltsin proposes to scrap the old order entirely and remake Russia into a strong presidential republic. His draft constitution would give the president extraordinary powers to rule by decree and appoint government ministers, military commanders and federal judges. He could also dissolve the parliament if it rejects his appointees or budgetary proposals, and assume its powers until new elections are held.

The president's aides are fond of comparing him with Gen. Charles de Gaulle, who dissolved the fractious and ineffectual Fourth Republic in 1958 and imposed a strong presidency that kept parliament in its place and mediated the people's will through frequent referenda and plebiscites. But, as historian Roy Medvedev has pointed out, that was France, with a long democratic tradition, an expanding economy and a deeply rooted civil society. This is Russia, with a dismal history of one-man rule, accelerating economic collapse, mass impoverishment and virtually no autonomous social institutions.

Yeltsin has made it plain that once the assembly has adopted a draft charter, it will not be placed before the Congress for ratification. "That avenue is exhausted," he told reporters in mid-June. What he will do is not clear, though he has suggested various alternatives—all of them extralegal—including holding a public referendum on the new document and asking regional leaders to adopt it by declaration.

All this comes as a shock to reformers in the Russian parliament, who have been laboring over a new constitution for two years. Ironically, the 95-member Congress drafting commission is chaired by none other than Yeltsin himself. In April, however, sensing approaching victory in his public struggle against Congress, he renounced the legislature's project as "inappropriate for Russia's conditions."

The chief architect of the parliamentary draft, Oleg Rummyantsev, a leading democrat and erstwhile Yeltsin ally, is furious. "The president's draft places him not only beyond the framework of all three branches of power—legislative, executive and judicial—but also above them," charges Rummyantsev. "This is a feature intrinsic in authoritarian and undemocratic regimes."

Experts say there is about a 60 percent overlap between the parliamentary and presidential drafts. Both envision replacing the unwieldy Congress with a bicameral legislature; both are largely modeled on successful Western precepts of government.

The major difference concerns the presidency. Parliament's version envisions a British-style parliamentary system, in which government answers to the legislature and the president is head of state with little day-to-day power. Key reformist and centrist deputies, including Rummyantsev, insist the Congress of People's Deputies could be persuaded to adopt the parliamentary draft—though not the president's—thus ensuring a legal, constitutional transition from one system to the next.

Yeltsin's supporters counter that the results of April's referendum amount to a mandate for the president to shatter the political deadlock and impose strong leadership in Russia. "It's not realistic to stick to the law," says Sergei Yushenkov, a pro-Yeltsin parliamentary deputy. "The Congress is now illegitimate." That is an argument Yeltsin has hammered at for months, and one that has been echoed as far afield as Washington, London and Tokyo.

When they dismiss the Russian parliament in such terms, people are often thinking of the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, which had one-third of its members selected by social organizations. But in contrast to the 1989 Soviet vote, Russian elections the following year were all multi-candidate contests in demographically equal constituencies.

Of course, the majority of those elected were Communists. Background conditions favored the well-connected, educated elite, who were overwhelmingly Party members. Can anyone imagine Yeltsin would be president today had he not been raised to the Politburo and the public eye by Mikhail Gorbachev? A lifelong apparatchik, Yeltsin moved shrewdly, parting with his Party card less than three years ago, in the glare of TV lights, at the Soviet Communist Party's funereal 28th Congress.

That is not to disparage him. When he was elected to the Russian Congress in 1990 Yeltsin was already an anti-establishment Communist, as were a majority of his fellow deputies. People who glibly explain today's crisis by claiming the parliament is "dominated by hard-liners" should check back over their press clippings. The Russian Congress elected Yeltsin as its first chairman in the spring of 1990; it recommended him as its candidate to be the first independently elected Russian president in June 1991; it stood by him during the abortive August coup and later granted him sweeping emergency powers to implement radical economic reforms.

Less than a third of Congress deputies still belong to communist or nationalist factions. Actually, that makes it a pretty good mirror of Russian society: approximately the same proportion of the population consistently tell pollsters they would like to return to a planned economy.

The most useful question to ask in this context is how Yeltsin managed to alienate a parliament that less than two years ago had a strong reform majority and overwhelmingly supported him.

Opposition leaders, including former Yeltsin allies such as Khasbulatov and Vice President Alexander Rutskoi, charge that Yeltsin has an "autocratic style," that he is incapable of compromise, that he is quick to label a critic an enemy and that he has been accumulating far too much power in "parallel government" bodies such as the shadowy Security Council.

As Russian society appears to be splitting almost down the middle, danger signals are multiplying. A troubling illustration was recently offered by Artemy Troitsky, a popular music critic who after the referendum vented his misgivings in the English-language *Moscow Times*. In the run-up to the April 25 vote, he wrote, "The Russian artistic and intellectu-

al establishment showed a degree of servility and tastelessness I haven't witnessed since 1982 or so."

At a pro-Yeltsin meeting of leading intellectuals in Moscow, he wrote, "A certain Ivanov, a well-known author of literary parodies, made a passionate speech in honor of Gen. Augusto Pinochet, calling him 'a great patriot who saved his country from the horror of communism.' The crowd cheered loudly and applauded. And I thought about this paradoxical situation: The Russian intelligentsia, which is now free to travel in Europe and America, which is free to have all the contact it wants with the rest of the world, now is more remote from the world's 'highbrow' community than in the times of totalitarian isolation. ...

"I want to stress that mentioning the Chilean ex-dictator was not just an isolated, if unfortunate, incident," he continued. "One week later, at a meeting with Yeltsin, a prominent classical pianist passionately asked the president: 'Why don't you use force against them?' presumably referring to Yeltsin's political enemies. Kind Boris looked like a dove among the bloodthirsty hawks of the Russian artistic elite."

Tension and fear pervade every Russian social stratum. The intelligentsia, like generals fighting the last war, are fixated on the minuscule communist threat. Workers and peasants have their own, different reasons for dreaming of a good czar.

Social polarization was deeply aggravated by a referendum that implicitly asked people to choose between two legally

elected branches of government. Next, an extralegal assembly was summoned, with a stacked membership and orders to adopt a new national charter in 10 days. The danger is that revolutionary struggle will once again be substituted for the time-consuming, humbling but quintessentially democratic business of compromising with one's opponents and building coalitions within the existing constitutional order.

The incessant propaganda of the Yeltsin camp, unfortunately supported by Western leaders, drums out a single message: it's Yeltsin or Communism. There is no alternative.

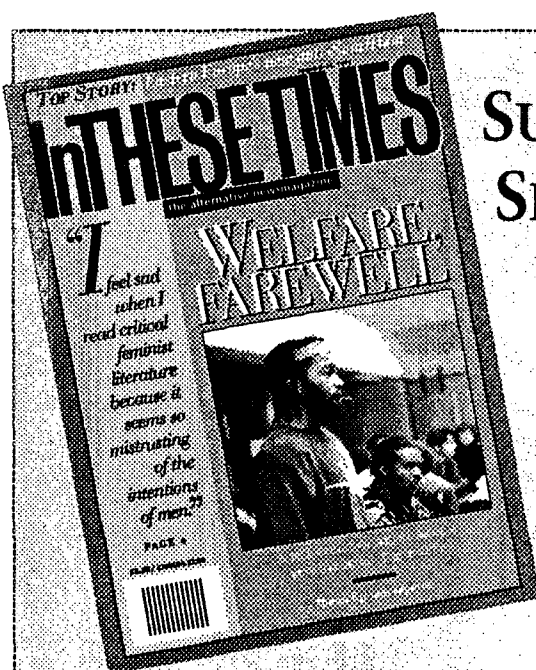
But what about that? Is there an alternative?

During a pre-referendum interview, the chief justice of the Siberian republic of Sakha-Yakutia, Dmitri Mironov—a very wise man—offered an answer so simple, so obvious, that it struck me with the force of revelation: "Let us pray that no one wins this power struggle," he said. "That would spell the end of democracy in Russia."

He continued: "Such strife is normal. If the sides learn to conduct it through agreed channels and within accepted limits, genuine democratic institutions—which are only an idea for us now—will take root and grow. In building a resilient democracy, the exact terms of the constitution are less important than staying within the constitutional process.

"So let's hope the deadlock, which so frustrates politicians on both sides, will go on indefinitely. A few centuries would be just right."

Fred Weir is an *In These Times* correspondent in Moscow.



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VIEWPOINT

The terror error

By Miles Harvey

“We will combat terrorism,” Bill Clinton vowed when explaining the U.S. air attack on Iraq late last month. With communism out of the picture, terrorism has become the enemy-for-all-occasions of U.S. foreign policy.

But what exactly is terrorism? That’s a question I used to ask my editors at United Press International when I worked for the wire service in the mid-’80s. I could never quite figure out why UPI labeled paramilitary actions against civilian targets in Israel “terrorist attacks,” while calling identical incidents in Nicaragua “rebel raids.”

Could it be, I asked my bosses, that the U.S. government supports those targeted by the attacks in Israel, while it trains, feeds and arms the attackers themselves in Nicaragua? And if so, should an “objective” news organization like UPI be in the business of propagandizing on behalf of the State Department? Shouldn’t the wire service—which has a “style book” to dictate exactly how reporters and editors use specific words—at least come up with a definition of “terrorism”? UPI’s international desk never bothered to respond to my queries.

In 1989, while on freelance assign-

ment for another publication, I took an informal survey of 10 leading American news outlets (Associated Press, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, National Public Radio, ABC television, CBS television and NBC television) about how they handled the term. Only the *Wall Street Journal* had any systematic way of determining who is a terrorist or what constitutes a terrorist act.

As Thomas W. Lippman, who had recently finished overhauling the *Washington Post*’s style manual, explained at the time, “In the year I spent working on revisions of the style book, this issue did not arise.”

It showed. On July 25, 1986, for example, the *Post* ran a story about a

grenade attack on the West Bank that left 13 Israeli civilians injured. The suspected culprits: “Arab terrorists.” Five days later, the same paper ran a UPI story about a gunfire-and-grenade attack in Nicaragua that left five civilians dead. The probable perpetrators: contra “rebels.”

It’s no wonder Ronald Reagan and George Bush had such an easy time exploiting the threat of “terrorism” to justify their foreign escapades. Media malleability over terrorism hit its height during the U.S. invasion of Iraq. For example, in a memorable Feb. 8, 1991, report from the front lines of Saudi Arabia, *NBC Nightly News* journalist Brad Willis told America: “Standing guard, young Marines man their guns, looking for possible Iraqi terrorists coming their way.” Yeah, and who were the young men on the opposite lines waiting for?

Now even the beleaguered Bill Clinton is discovering the joys of battling terrorism. The mainstream media has been suspicious of the president’s motives in such weighty matters as haircuts, pet care and travel agents. But when Clinton announced that a terrorist plot had prompted him to bomb Iraq, the press just went along for the ride. As a June 28 *New York Times* headline put it: “U.S. says strike crippled Iraq’s capacity for terror.” That capacity was never questioned.

I’m not in any way trying to excuse Saddam Hussein’s alleged plot to assassinate George Bush. But I’m sickened by the media’s acceptance of that allegation as fact. The U.S. government has proven itself an unreliable source on such matters.

Back when Baghdad was buddy-buddy with Washington in 1988, the Pentagon published *Terrorist Group Profiles*, a slick, 131-page assessment of international terrorism. “The American public needs to understand terrorism, what it is and is not,”

***By not coming
to grips with
“terrorism,”
the press is
complicit in
government
propaganda.***

then-Vice President George Bush wrote in the introduction.

The book's overview of the Mideast outlined what terrorism "was and was not" in the region. Terrorism was Libya, terrorism was Syria, terrorism was Iran (the mutual enemy, not coincidentally, of Baghdad and Washington), terrorism was a plethora of Palestinian groups.

Terrorism was not, apparently, Iraq, which went entirely without mention in the Mideast overview and was later cited only in passing. This, despite the fact that earlier that same year the Iraqi army had allegedly gassed Kurd villagers, the first-ever use of chemical weapons by a state against its own citizens.

For politicians like Clinton—whose approval rating jumped 11 percent in the aftermath of the raid—the beauty of terrorism is that it sounds, well, terrifying, but is hard to pin down. Experts generally agree on a broad definition of terrorism as acts

of violence or threats of violence against a civilian population. But Clinton's attack on Iraq killed civilians. Does that make the president of the United States a terrorist?

No, argue other experts, because real terrorism must be mainly symbolic—that is, its primary purpose is to inspire terror. Yet that seemed to be precisely the goal of Clinton's actions. As the *Times*' Thomas L. Friedman wrote: "By attacking the Iraqi intelligence headquarters the administration was trying to signal that those involved in terrorism would be personally targeted in response."

Still other experts would claim that Clinton, as a head of state, could never be a terrorist. They define terrorism as violence committed by *non-governmental* forces. But if that's the case, Hussein is no terrorist, either.

The word "terrorism," in fact,

was first used to describe violence by the state. The word was born during Maximilien Robespierre's bloody Reign of Terror following the French Revolution.

But by 1813, John Adams—in a letter to Thomas Jefferson—was using "terrorism" to describe a number of violent uprisings *against* the U.S. government, such as Shays' Rebellion of 1787.

Adams also applied the term to the work of journalists who had been critical of his Federalist presidency. It was Adams who, as president in 1798, signed into law the short-lived Sedition Act, which made it a criminal offense to print or publish false, malicious or scandalous statements directed against the U.S. government, its Congress or its president.

As Bill Clinton is now learning, Adams need not have worried. ▲

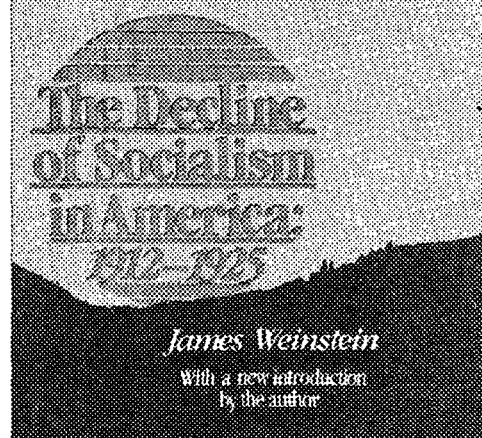
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E D U C A T I O N

Two worlds, one classroom

By Beverly E. Cross

I recently heard Maya Angelou speak at a national education conference. She told the group that "educators should set children's minds free and encourage them to run always to see what the end will be." Listening to her words made me think of my current job as a professor of education responsible for helping to prepare teachers to teach in city schools and my past as an African-American girl educated in segregated schools in Alabama. I was left pondering how teachers are prepared to educate children who are different from them.

I thought of my university students, most of whom are white and, as future teachers, will teach African-American children. All but one of my students last year attended all-white elementary and high schools. Most of them now live in communities that are predominantly white. I was the first African-American teacher any of them had ever had. As I listened to Angelou, I wondered if the teachers-to-be in my university classes could understand the poetry of her song and draw inspiration from it to teach culturally and racially diverse children.

I recalled my own education experiences in the South. In elementary school, I was taught by African-American teachers, and all the children in

my classes were African-American. I felt encouraged by people who looked like me, talked like me, and knew me. I never doubted that they expected my best. They wanted me to succeed. While I was in middle school, the schools I attended were desegregated. I remember my anxiety when I wondered who would teach me, if these teachers would care for me, what they would think of me, what they would expect of me, and what I would learn.

My anxiety came from the knowledge that my new teachers would be primarily white. I was concerned about being taught by teachers I thought to be so unlike me. My fears were somewhat unfounded because, although my teachers in desegregated

schools were predominantly white and the students African-American, my community was not racially isolated. African-Americans and whites interacted with one another daily through their lives in the community.

The students in my teacher-education classes have not had such experiences. Their communities are much more isolated. They have not had as much interaction with people racially and culturally different from themselves. What can I say and do that will help such students understand children of different races and cultures?

When we discussed cultural and racial diversity, it was evident how my students' white, middle-class values, attitudes and beliefs shaped their understanding of the African-American students they would be teaching. They often assumed that African-American parents "don't care about their children," "are all on welfare by choice," and "are not interested in being involved in their children's education." Even after completing 50 hours of field experience in schools with diverse student populations and seeing many parents entering and exiting the school daily, many of my students still believed that the parents they had observed were an anomaly. They held fast to their preconceived judgments. Somehow their notions about parental involvement in schools were not challenged by what they were observing every week. What did my students need to experience to help them think critically about their beliefs about culturally and racially diverse children?

My students were uncomfortable discussing culture and race. They told me they were especially uncomfortable discussing it with me, an African-American. Many seemed afraid of using inappropriate language, revealing questionable assumptions or seeming insensitive. On one occasion, a student fumbled to say the word "white." Another student whispered to her, "It's OK to say it." Throughout the year, I worked to help

*My student
teachers are
uncomfortable
discussing race,
and especially
discussing it with
me, an African-
American.*

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students engage in constructing and affirming acceptable ways to discuss culture and race.

In the public schools where my students do their field work, however, dialogue about culture and race is often invisible. I have observed administrators and teachers working to determine how to improve schools, without pausing to consider the necessity of improving race and cultural relations in their schools. I have become concerned that engaging my students in talking about race and culture in my university classes without similar discussion in their field work schools has made it difficult for them to challenge their preconceived ideas.

It was well into the semester before I realized that our weekly discussions, writings and activities were not having much impact on the way my students thought about teaching culturally and racially diverse children. Perhaps I was naive about how much change I could expect. Yet I worry that my students won't be able to learn how to help African-American children sing the songs of their lives, if, despite my best efforts, few of them manage to change their views. I worry that too many of my students will get caught up in learning about particular subject areas, teaching methods and classroom man-

Professor Beverly Cross
with student teachers at the
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

agement and will find it easy to set race and culture aside because they find it uncomfortable.

African-American children will be taught primarily by white teachers. In my city school district, only 18 percent of the teachers are African-American. If minority children in city schools are to learn, then they need teachers who understand them, support them and

have high expectations.

In conversations with my university students and with various groups of teachers in their first three years of teaching, both groups said that three things above all occupied their time and had influence on their effectiveness as teachers. They described their continuous need to discipline children, their inability to motivate children and the stress of meeting children's individual learning differences. Culture and race were never mentioned. There was never any consideration of the teacher's role in helping children strive to see who they can be.

Is Maya Angelou's ideal for education too optimistic and unrealistic? I hope not. However, her ideal can never be realized if we don't pay attention to who teaches in city schools and how well they are taught to teach children of different cultural and racial backgrounds. ◀

Beverly E. Cross is a professor of curriculum and instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

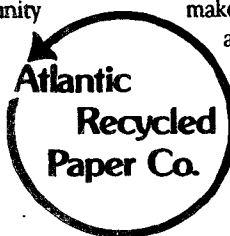
This article is part of a continuing series on education edited by Alex Molnar, a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The series, "Notes From the Back of the Class," covers a wide range of education-related issues. Contributions from readers are welcome. Manuscripts of no more than 1,000 words should be sent to Alex Molnar c/o In These Times, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.



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I N T H E A R T S

It's a man's world

O

In Sally Potter's engaging Orlando, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

By Pat Dowell

Orlando opened in American theaters on the same day as *Jurassic Park*, and a more instructive contrast in the meanings of the word "movie" couldn't have been bought with all the money at Steven Spielberg's disposal.

Jurassic Park opened in 2,404 theaters nationwide, while *Orlando* made it onto four screens—all in New York and Los Angeles. (It should be in a theater near you before summer's over.) Spielberg spent 60 million Hollywood dollars, supplied by Universal's Japanese owners; *Orlando*'s director, Briton Sally Potter, grubbed a mere \$4 million and change from her multinational investors and still managed to shoot the best-looking movie of the year, on location in England, St. Petersburg and Uzbekistan.

Spielberg used every mir-

acle of modern image technology; Potter used her imagination. His leisure-industry leviathan is engineered with the ideology of family values (see *In These Times*, June 28); her spritely fable soars on challenges to propriety and patriarchy. *Jurassic Park* is about bringing the past to life; *Orlando* is about meeting the future head on.

Both movies do have something in common, however. They are about illusory creatures: re-created dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park*, and in *Orlando*, men and women as society creates them. And in both movies, individuals change sex.

Orlando is transformed from a man to a woman during a deep sleep in 1750, but the story is well under fantastic sail by then, since *Orlando* has already lived more than a century. Freely adapted from Virginia Woolf's 1928 novel—a lover's tribute to English novelist, poet and famous lesbian Vita Sackville-West—the movie begins in 1600. *Orlando*, played by the sublime actress Tilda Swinton throughout, is a lovely young man who catches the eye of Queen Elizabeth (played, in a telling gender switch, by gay writer Quentin Crisp).

Elizabeth bestows on *Orlando* a great house, on one condition. "Do not fade, do not wither, do not grow old," she commands, and *Orlando* obeys. The movie blithely accepts that he remains young (and relatively naive) throughout the next 400 years of British history, right up to the present day. The novel ended in 1928. Sally Potter has brought it up to the age of camcorders.

The movie, a bare 93 minutes long, visits several historical moments in tracing *Orlando*'s feminist odyssey. As the film moves along, its tone grows more skeptical about the things history does not change, in terms of class and gender. Every era has its color scheme and perfectly realized decor, but this is not a film that re-creates history, rather one that comments on it. Each section has its subtitle ("Death," "Love," "Poetry," "Politics," "Society," "Sex," "Birth") and each presents another stage in *Orlando*'s education, which goes into high gear on that fateful morning when he wakes up to find himself a she. The change comes following *Orlando*'s first encounter with war, and his rejection of what Potter seems to see as the male condition—to kill or be killed.

The big change is not so much in *Orlando* him/herself—"Same person, no difference at all, just a different sex," *Orlando* turns to



Orlando
Directed by Sally Potter

Photos © 1993 courtesy of Sony Pictures Entertainment, Inc.



the camera, naked, and reminds us—but in the place Orlando must now occupy in society. Returning to bewigged and powdered 18th-century England, the Lady Orlando is reminded in what little esteem even the best male minds hold women. A salon of poets and wits patronize her with epigrams, and she is sued for her property because, being a woman, she cannot own any. It is much the same thing, she is informed, as being dead.

Orlando's property, the great house, was the center of the character's struggle in Woolf's novel, and the rest of the book was devoted to Orlando's heroic efforts to keep it, primarily by producing a male heir. The real-life Orlando, Vita Sackville-West, had lost her own beloved family estate to distant male relatives because of English law regarding women and property.

Sally Potter's *Orlando* improves on that class-bound trajectory by making the story about more than one kind of liberation. Throughout history as a man, Orlando is only dimly aware of the class warfare that provides his wealth and ease. The spectacle of a peasant woman frozen under the ice of the River Thames affords callous merriment for the king. A tender moment with the Russian princess Orlando adores is broken by the sight and sound of an ancient

wood carrier struggling through the snow.

Once Orlando becomes a woman, she is assaulted much more directly by the inequities of gender and class. And when she eventually produces an heir, Potter makes the child a daughter, not a son, and thus a child who cannot reclaim the estate for Orlando—only project her values into a future that will, presumably, find women stronger and more, well, self-possessed.

One might wonder, however, why Orlando is involved in such a convention-bound process as motherhood at all, since it is every Real Woman's destiny in the movies, and, if the right wing had its way, in life as well. Sally Potter admits that she had misgivings herself, and changed the ending of the movie several times before settling on the image of Orlando's daughter with a camcorder in hand, filming her mother.

That ending is a gesture, a wave of hello, I think, to the women of the future, and *Orlando* is a movie resolutely, even exhilaratingly, aimed toward the future. Tied down neither to historical realism nor conventional narrative techniques, nor even the notion of fixed and immutable genders, it skips through time and the mind with an airy grace, light years ahead of Hollywood's dinosaurs. ◀

IN PRINT

Rousseau in China

By James North

This remarkable new book is worth more than all the daily press accounts about Tiananmen Square and its aftermath put together. After completing the well-paced, lively narrative of *Black Hands of Beijing* you feel as though you can finally make some sense out of the fragmented, sometimes tendentious, sometimes inaccurate jumble of images and articles that came out of Beijing four years ago.

The co-authors make a good team. Black, a former foreign editor of *The Nation*, is a skilled writer with several excellent books on Latin America to his credit (including the innovative *The Good Neighbor*). Munro, fluent in Chinese, lives in Hong Kong and works with the human rights agency Asia Watch; he was one of the few foreigners to stay in Tiananmen Square through the entire night of June 3, 1989, when the "massacre" took place.

The authors explain why the quotation marks are necessary: "There was no massacre in Tiananmen Square," they say. "But on the western approach roads ... there was a bloodbath that claimed hundreds of lives when the People's Liberation Army found its path blocked by a popular uprising that was being fueled by despair and rage. To insist on this distinction is not splitting hairs. What took place was the slaughter not of students but of ordinary workers and residents—precisely the target that the Chinese government had intended."

Black Hands is much more than an accurate look into the historical record; it brings a human dimension to the tragedy. Those who write about foreign events, particularly in the Third World, have a tremendous task before them. So much is unfamiliar to Western readers: the sights, sounds, smells, the most elementary cultural references. When a person in an article says, "I'm a typical steelworker from Gary, Indiana," even a reader who can't tell a blast furnace from a rolling mill has at least some idea of who the man is. But when a person says, "I'm a typical graduate of Beijing University," or "My uncle had the usual characteristics of a

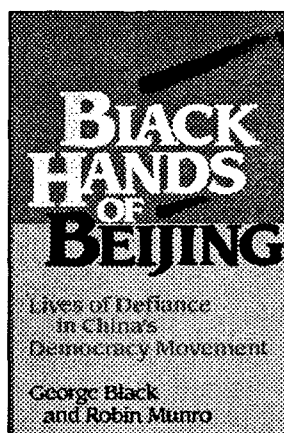
Sichuanese storekeeper," the references are meaningless. Not only do we not understand; we don't connect emotionally, and it is hard for us to empathize other than in the most detached and abstract way.

Black and Munro have found a brilliant way around this dilemma, using three figures in China's democracy movement to tell the movement's history. Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao are intellectuals; they helped set up the first independent think tank in Beijing in the '80s, as China underwent rapid social ferment. Han Dongfang was a charismatic railway worker who visited Tiananmen Square after the student protesters had already taken it over in April 1989; he promptly started making open-air speeches calling for an independent trade union.

The authors do an impressive job re-creating the lives of these three men. Their task was particularly difficult because Chen and Wang are each serving long prison terms, accused of being "black hands"—that is, sinister misleaders of gullible students. Their convictions, which were apparently ordered by the highest Party circles, were more than a little ironic, since they had done everything they could to restrain the students, whom they regarded as dangerously naive and needlessly provocative.

Both Chen and Wang were wary of the chaos they thought the students were heading toward, because they had experienced such chaos themselves during the Cultural Revolution. Like millions of urban youths, Chen was "sent down" to the countryside, in his case to inner Mongolia, where he read Montesquieu while living in a simple herder's hut.

Chen has a fierce intellect but a retiring manner. Wang, seven years his junior, complements him well—an outgoing student leader from a privileged party background who was arrested after his first pro-democracy rally when he was only 16 years old.



Black Hands of Beijing:
Lives of Defiance in
China's Democracy
Movement

By George Black and
Robin Munro
Wiley
390 pp., \$24.95

In 1986, they established the Social and Economic Sciences Research Institute. At the time, the Communist leader Deng Xiaoping was promoting changes in the rigid Maoist command economy, but he hesitated to allow more political freedom. But some Communist Party leaders, including a few at the top, sympathized with the Institute—the equivalent of, say, America's treasury secretary meeting with 26-year-old activists to plan how to subvert his department's fossilized bureaucracy. In China, the '80s were a time of great intellectual excitement, when growing numbers of

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**Demonstrators at
Tiananmen Square.**

people, at least in the cities, hotly debated China's future; young thinkers consulted translations of Rousseau with the same practical spirit we might bring to an auto repair manual. The Institute's thinkers challenged the Communist Party's monopoly on power by insisting that the best guarantee against abuses like the Cultural Revolution was a plurality of independent organizations, the nurturance of what elsewhere in the world was coming to be called "civil society."

In some ways the most impressive major character in *Black Hands* is Han Dongfang, the young railway worker. He had first challenged authority as a noncommissioned military officer, when he publicly denounced his superiors for stealing food and wrongly punishing his men. These were just the kinds of abuses that a growing number of Chinese said could only be curbed by the checks and balances of a pluralist society. So when the students took over Tiananmen Square in 1989, he joined them, helping to found the Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation in a tent.

By contrast, the students in the Square come off as elitist and self-absorbed, unwilling to even let the workers use their loudspeakers—obviously, ingrained snobbery survived the leveling effort of the Cultural Revolution. After crushing the demonstration, the regime treated many of the students with surprising indulgence, realizing perhaps that their elitism would gradually overcome their adolescent passions.

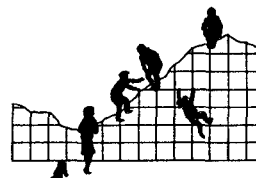
But for workers like Han, it was another matter; some were actually executed. Han turned himself in, but refused to play the regime's game of repentance in exchange for a shorter sentence; harsh prison conditions nearly killed him before an international human rights campaign helped to get him released and out of the country.

At times, the intellectuals Chen and Wang sound elitist, even slightly priggish. But they made up for everything when they stood up in court, on trial as scapegoats. The two were to be punished harshly as examples to other dissident intellectuals, some of whom had already stepped back in line. They refused to ask for mercy, and each got 13 years.

Later, in prison, Chen wrote a moving essay that is quoted in the book. This complex man, probably most comfortable with the dry language of political theory, expressed himself poetically. "If I were asked to choose between personal freedom and truth, I would, without any hesitation, choose the latter," he wrote. "I love my wife, parents, sisters and brothers and my friends deeply, and I hope to be reunited with them all soon. But I will not abandon truth or my moral integrity."

Then he promised, "I will always keep my self-confident smile, my oceans-wide good intentions, my backbone as erect as a pine tree, and I will continue to believe firmly that the strength and heat of love can melt even the hardest and most frozen of hearts."

James North, the author of *Freedom Rising* (Macmillan), is completing a book about the world debt crisis, the global economy and the continuing inequality between the First and Third Worlds.



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I N P R I N T

Straight shooting

By Michael S. Sherry

The current debate over gays in the military seemed to come suddenly out of an historical nowhere. Not because of its novelty, Randy Shilts' *Conduct Unbecoming* suggests, but because our refusal to recognize the injustice to gay personnel has blinded us to its earlier visibility. It's scarcely remembered that in the '70s gay Air Force Sgt. Leonard Matlovich graced *Time* magazine's cover, that NBC made a docudrama of his crusade against the ban, that presidential aspirant Jimmy Carter announced, "I oppose all forms of discrimination against individuals, including discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation." By the late '70s, gay personnel were informally organizing, open defiance was rising and court cases threatened military policy. What seems a new issue is an old one, even in the public arena.

By 1980, as the Cold War heated up once again, the counterattack was in full force: discharges and punitive punishments escalated, rising numbers of women provided new fuel for homophobia, and the Carter administration scurried away from whatever commitment to gay rights it had made. It went backward from there—however faint-hearted liberals and Democrats have been on this issue, it's worth remembering now that conservative Republicans have been worse. Anti-homosexual policies, which once rested on a consensus among liberals and conservatives so automatic that it needed no articulation, were now the latter's favorite cause, at least among New Right moralists. (The Old Right's Barry Goldwater, by contrast, has now issued a thundering call to lift the ban.)

Implemented during the Carter-Reagan transition, new Pentagon regulations proscribed not only those with homosexual behavior or "associations" but the mere "desire" for such behavior. "The military," notes Shilts with pardonable

exaggeration, "had, in effect, banned homosexual thoughts," and what had once been a "preoccupation" became "an obsession." AIDS intensified that obsession, less because the disease worried officials than because screening for it gave them a new device to identify and purge gay men. Perhaps most decisively, Reagan's judicial appointees gave the obsession new legal protection.

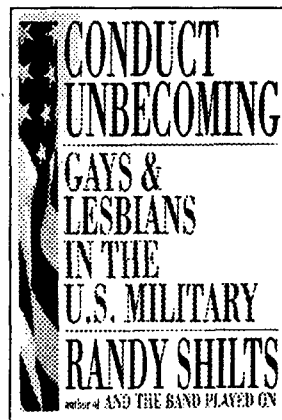
Despite—or because of—those developments, the gay subculture, tolerated by many commanders, rose ever nearer the surface of military life as gay discos flourished on aircraft carriers and the camp dance hit "It's Raining Men" rang out even on remote bases. Both more intense and more openly defied, military homophobia was on a collision course with internal and external pressures that ended in the current maelstrom.

I began Shilts' massive book preparing for a scholar's typical demolition job on journalistic history. The flaws are evident: Shilts has a woefully ahistorical concept of homosexuality (as if being gay were the same in 1993 as in 1793); he poorly grasps the American history that surrounds his subject; he wrings certainty from the most ambiguous evidence.

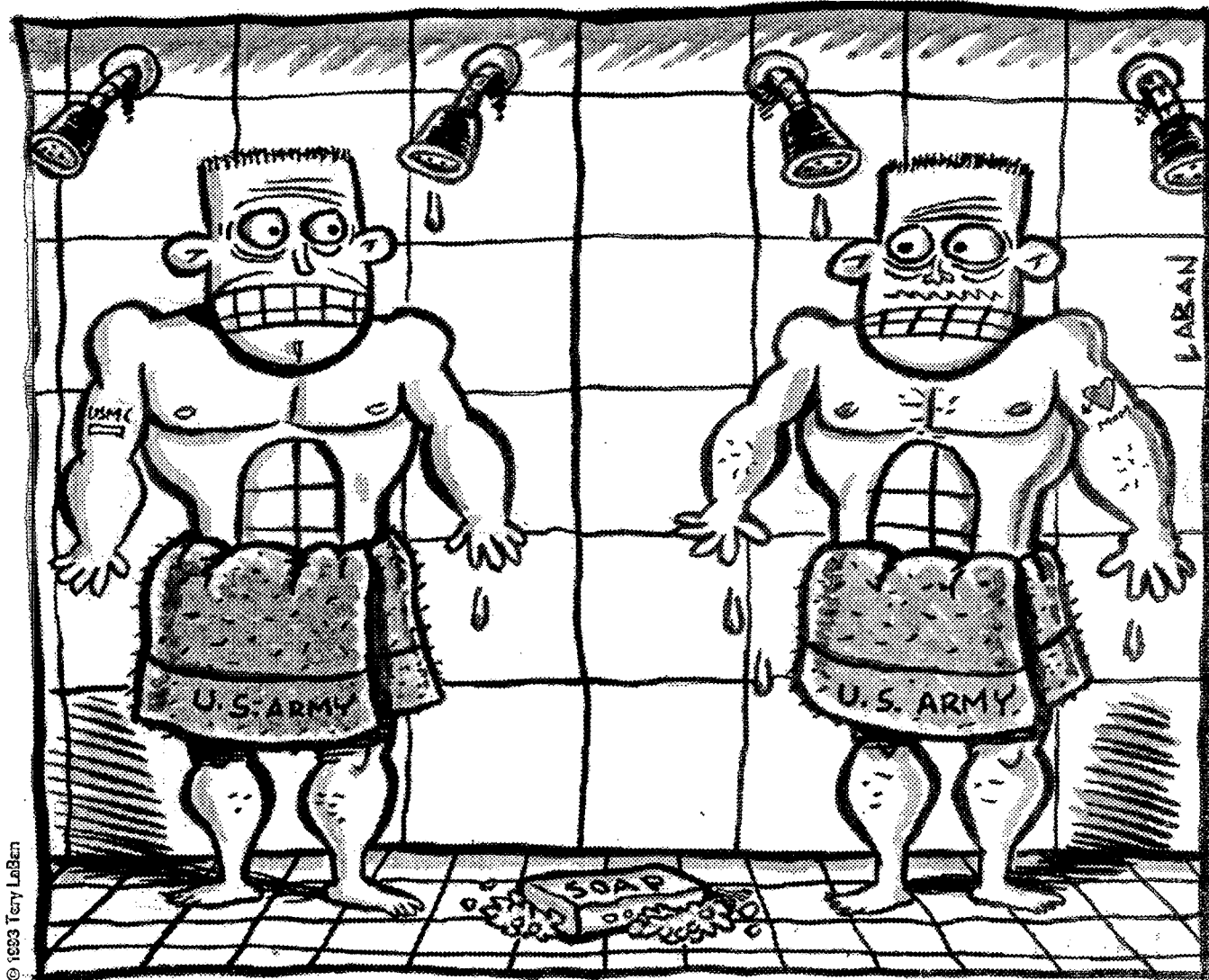
But if no Michel Foucault, Randy Shilts has written a powerful book with a grasp of detail no scholar is likely to match. Even the most informed scholars (and veterans) know this story only in vague outline. Despite the ban, as Shilts documents, many gay people have served in the armed forces and been viciously investigated, abused and humiliated—damaging job prospects and family ties, as well as military efficiency.

Shilts' success lies less in drawing the broad outlines of this familiar story than in giving it life, scale, specificity and moral drama. At the center of that drama is hypocrisy—both of the armed forces, which have enforced the ban when it was convenient and ignored it when not; and to a lesser extent of the gay rights movement, which often seems less interested in overturning the ban than in using its victims as poster children for different causes.

Shilts is at his best laying out the "totalitarian tactics" of military investigative agencies. Since a soldier's own words, service record and the testimony of "aggrieved 'victims'" rarely produce evidence of homosexuality, "illegal coercive interrogations are not an unfortunate side effect of anti-gay regulations; they are virtually the only way to execute the work that the regulations demand." This has led to gross violations of due process, physi-



**Conduct Unbecoming:
Gays & Lesbians in the
U.S. Military**
By Randy Shilts
St. Martin's Press
784 pp., \$27.95



cal and emotional brutalization of those suspected (whether gay or not) and crude doctoring of military records. Making the process more capricious has been the willingness of officials to bend the rules when it serves their needs—because someone is highly valued or has access to powerful supporters, because of wartime demands for personnel, because some victims threaten embarrassing publicity that might expose the military's illegal ways or its tacit acceptance of many queers. To make exceptions possible, enforcement had to be even more uneven and hypocritical, viciously advanced in some cases and laughably waived in others.

Shilts, in the grand and often useful tradition of muck-raking journalism, tends to condemn rather than to explain; he's never wholly able to account for why the military's ban came into place and why support for it persists. To find an explanation in the various rationales offered for official policy is a feckless endeavor, for the rationales have changed greatly since their initial formulation during World War II—only the policy itself has remained fairly consistent. But

parts of an explanation can be found here, if untidily scattered about in this huge book.

Military policies spring from more than obvious homophobia. Few deny—and long-suppressed Defense Department studies have admitted—that gay men and women have served ably and honorably. The debate now focuses less on the alleged misdeeds of gay people than on the fear and mistrust straight soldiers have of gays. If “unit cohesion” suffers, it will not be because of the inherent disruptiveness of a gay presence but because the armed forces have so long cultivated homophobia.

To be sure, malign notions of homosexuality still lurk in this debate: the notorious shower argument, usually accompanied in television coverage by teasing footage of naked men in the contested site, conjures up images of predatory homosexual rapists. But even that argument presumes an aggressive sexuality that further buries old stereotypes of limp-wristed gay men and asexual lesbians, and it focuses on straight men fearful less of attack than of the mere thought of being gazed upon as sexual objects. Such fears

are not new; they long existed alongside a host of other fears and stereotypes, like the claims that homosexuals were security risks, faint-hearted soldiers or moral perverts. But now they've displaced the older claims. Whatever the outcome of the current debate, that shift in focus—from the failings of gay personnel to the anxieties of straight ones—guarantees that any compromise will be unstable, that the fight will continue. (The current compromises being floated promise much litigation and little justice, a sort of New Deal jobs program for lawyers.)

The fact that the military long tolerated many homosexuals and now draws the line between "open" and secret homosexuality further suggests that the issue is less homosexuality per se than power: the military's power to govern itself, in one of the few arenas remaining for it to exercise such power. Racial, religious and ethnic discrimination long ago became taboo—if hardly extinct—and gender discrimination, while far more persistent, by and large lacks the sanction of law and official policy. Only with respect to sexual orientation do military officials retain the legal right to define their institution in social terms, and to wield the power that right presupposes.

The preservation of the ban has as much to do with sexism as sexuality. It strengthens the military's hand in dealing with its most striking change—the growing numbers and expanding roles of women. As Shilts suggests, the military has enforced its ban more brutally against women because their presence is more novel and threatening to notions of military manhood than the familiar, if scarcely acknowledged, presence of gay men. The debate's extraordinary inattention to military women—hardly anyone has raised the dread specter of lesbians gazing at the naked bodies of other women—also suggests how much men and their anxieties drive the debate. With the ban intact, or just a watered-down version that keeps the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the armed forces will retain a powerful weapon for controlling women in the ranks: men can refute accusations of sexual harassment and worse by accusing the accuser of lesbianism.

The functional result of all these forces is certainly homophobia, often of the most repugnant sort. But that's just the point. An intricate social construction, homophobia has sprung not only from the direct hatred of homosexuals but out of complex impulses to exercise power over gender and social relations. Homophobia and sexism are so intricately linked in the military that one will not be dislodged without tackling the other, and without seeing both as something more than simply irrational intolerance. The right to stigmatize and eject confers power, and power in this arena has been consciously, cynically and "rationally" pursued.

Beyond the conscious exercise of power lies another level of military homophobia whose logic, if any, is only perverse. Military authorities have routinely blackmailed gay personnel in the name of guarding against their vulnerability to blackmail—forcing lesbians and gay men into accepting dis-

honorable discharges, ratting on friends and cowering in submission. Homosexuals have indeed been vulnerable to blackmail, but it came from their fellow Americans, not Soviet agents. As was often the case in the Cold War, much of the evil projected onto the blank screen of "communism" was a projection of the cruelties that powerful Americans visited upon the less powerful.

But if the injustice and stupidity Shilts documents have been around for so long, why has this issue come now so prominently to the fore? It's certainly not because gay and lesbian activists made it their top priority—they made it a priority only in reaction to the furor set loose by Clinton's initial move in January. Why should dismantling the ban seem more urgent—or, to its opponents, dangerous—than securing a federal gay civil rights bill or getting gays into high offices?

Implicit in the debate is the assumption that the military retains pride of place among American institutions and that citizenship is secured above all by service in it. The assumption is understandable; after all, black Americans achieved integration in the armed forces before they did in most American institutions, and this initial achievement was the springboard for later ones. But this step came when the military was an ascendant institution, critical to Cold War politics. That this arena is now so privileged by both the ban's defenders and its opponents seems more curious.

My unsettling suspicion is that such debates serve ultimately to legitimate the military at a time when its mission is seriously in question. When it is too blatantly unrepresentative of the American people, the military becomes an alien institution unfit to enforce the nation's will. As "our" institution, it is empowered to act. It's doubtful, for example, that American armed forces could have intervened forcefully in Korea in 1950 if Truman in 1948 had not started the process of integrating them; both stateside politics and battlefield demands for troops made an integrated force necessary.

Too much has changed since 1948 to draw a close analogy between the debate over race and the current one over gender and homosexuality. But it may be that if this obstacle is overcome, our armed forces' charter will be renewed. While excluded from or oppressed within the armed forces, many gay men and women formed major phalanxes in the anti-war and anti-nuclear movements of the '60s, '70s and early '80s. Included, they will gain a sort of citizenship, but at a price for them and the nation—precisely why many gay activists, steeped in an earlier tradition of anti-war activism, have hesitated to make this their cause.

Yet, as Shilts shows, legions of gay military men and women already pay that price while running the constant risk of being denied the benefits of service. The debate is hardly about whether they will serve, but the conditions under which they do. Formal inclusion may empower the military; official exclusion can't be the way to contain it. ◀

Michael S. Sherry teaches U.S. history at Northwestern University. He is the author of *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon*, which won the 1987 Bancroft Prize.

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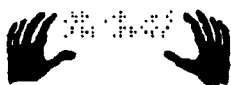
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avaricious reality. If your Buster has the Zeitgeist dead on, he should be whining by now that he's a growing boy and that sis is just a mouse who doesn't need dessert because it's bad for her anyway.

Greedy people, such as Republicans, make others leery of greedy people. Hypocrites, such as Democrats, make others leery of goodness in particular and everyone in general. The result is a net gain by default for the greedy that puts the Republicans back in power. This time around, however, there's a new twist to this old shuffle—which brings us to our next query.

Dear ITT Ideologist,

I recently made inquiry of "Walter Scott's Personality Parade" in *Parade Magazine* for a dollop of biographical information about a certain Luigi Facta.

I was informed that the column does not keep track of persons who are not Bon Jovi nor represented by the National Association of Flacks,

Fans, Hangers On, Toadies, Supernumeraries and Idolators. Could you help?

—D. Gergen, Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Gergen,

You should have come here first. The long deceased Luigi Facta (1861-1930) was a small-town lawyer from Italy's rural Piedmont. A talky politician with an eye for the ladies and a wife who also dabbled in statecraft, he was described in the reminiscences of Count Sforza as an "ever obliging petit bourgeois who was always smiling, always approving." Facta was a ditherer and vacillator of small note, and, concluded Sforza, was all in all "a man of nothing."

However, he was not all nothing. Facta had the capacity to disappoint. During his brief and shallow reign as prime minister, Italy's parliamentary politics-as-usual were under attack by an in-your-face sort of rooster of a non-politician with sharp eyes, jug ears and the gift of gab. This upstart was popular with veterans for having

championed their heroism in a stupid war, and with conservatives fed up by the venalities and idiocies of government and fearful of Italy's powerful leftist movements.

The challenger, of course, was Benito Mussolini. It was assumed amongst the decent bourgeoisie that Facta would waffle on Mussolini's demand that his ragtag fascist movement be represented in a coalition regime. Instead, Facta, with uncharacteristic decisiveness, immediately surrendered the whole government to Mussolini and sank back into the obscurity he so richly deserved.

The resemblance between Luigi Facta and Bill Clinton, on the one hand, and Benito Mussolini and Ross Perot, on the other, should be taken with due respect to Marx's observation that history generally repeats itself as farce. Still, it should be remembered that the U.S. in 1993, no less than Italy in 1922, is dismayed by a leader who looks to be "a man of nothing" and is increasingly open to something, anything—even Texans. ◀

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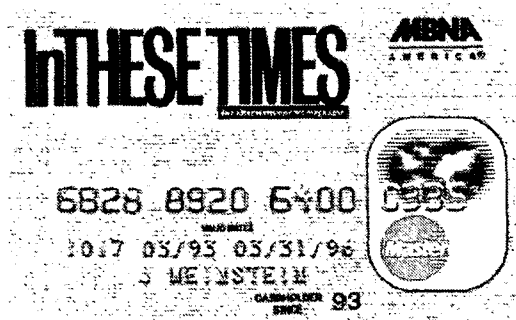
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I N T H E E N D

Nowhere men

By Pete Karman

Dear ITT Ideologist,

I've noticed a change in my nine-year-old son Buster in recent months that I thought you might be able to decipher. He used to wolf down his own dessert and then steal his little sister's, making her cry. We often had to pry her muffin out of his maw. Then, when Clinton became president, Buster announced a change of heart, promising he would henceforth share dessert with his sister. At the same time, however, the greater part of dessert began to disappear from the fridge before meals, leaving only minuscule portions for the table. Checking Buster's room, I found muffin crumbs, dried tapioca beads and jello shards under his bed. Help me to understand.

—Estelle Prodigal, St. Luke, Mo.

Dear Ms. Prodigal,

Count your Buster among those who have adapted to the shift in the Zeitgeist. He has successfully graduated from the Reagan-Bush era of unabashed greed to the Clinton age of calculated hypocrisy.

Greed, by itself, is an infantile instinct appropriate to Republicans and other primitives. But when mitigated by conscience and subverted by cynicism, greed turns into the subtle and civilized artifice called hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy holds that there is both a place for greed (in action) and for generosity (in rhetoric).

This is a change. For the last dozen years, and indeed for much of our history, the U.S. has been ruled by the conservative line on economics. This consists of two simple propositions. The first, joyously proclaimed by the Reagans of renewal, is that if you let the rich have everything they want, general prosperity will inevitably ensue. Then when, as is inevitable, the rich get richer while the rest of us drift into penury, it falls to the Bushes of retrenchment to sheepishly intone the second proposition, namely: tough, life is unfair.

The first line wins elections for Republicans, but the last one loses them. The problem, then, for the GOP is how to keep the rich purring and the rest of us groveling until they can cycle back into power.

That's what the Democrats and the Bill Clintons are for. They step into the breach, proclaiming that it's not life but Republicans that are unfair.

After this gets them elected, the smarmy rhetoric is quickly replaced by rationalizations for the same old

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